the weekly Standard

NOVEMBER 22, 1999

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Sex, Lies, and Conservatism

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TUCKER CARLSON & ANDREW FERGUSON

The Berlin Republic

Germany as a Great Power

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

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Issues in Health Care

Drug expenditures: Take off the green eyeshades.

by Alan F. Holmer

With much wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth, a Greek chorus of managed care executives is chanting a recurrent refrain: Prescription drug costs are spiraling out of control. Customers are demanding treatments that will raise their quality of life and keep them out of hospitals. What happened to the "good old days," when there simply were no treatments for conditions that pharmaceuticals can manage today, when patients either died—the cheapest outcome—or bit their lips and did without?

Drug expenditures were decidedly lower in those days—and so were life expectancy and the quality of life. Now medicines enable arthritis patients to go to work and take care of their families, lower blood pressure and prevent heart attacks and strokes, and help millions of people get on with their lives. Doesn't the incomparably greater value that medicines give today warrant spending more on them?

To patients and their families, this is a "no brainer." Take my own family. My son and daughter have cystic fibrosis. When they were born, the life expectancy for people with this genetic disease was about 18. Today, thanks to breakthrough medicines developed within my children's lifetime, life expectancy has doubled. Yes, the health care system is spending more on medicines for cystic fibrosis, but for patients and their families, the value of these drugs is beyond rubies.

Managed care executives seem unable to see beyond the narrow confines of their ledgers. They are so tightly focused on drug budgets that they often fail to see the value of increased drug utilization—both for patients and for health care's bottom line.

In many cases, innovative medicines save money. Stroke is a good example. The third leading killer of Americans, stroke costs more than $45 billion a year, in treatment expenditures and loss of earnings—in addition to enormous human costs. But clot-busting medicines are revolutionizing stroke treatment, yielding economic and human savings. A study found that treating stroke patients promptly with a clot-busting medicine nets average savings of $4,400 per patient by reducing the need for hospitalization, rehabilitation, and nursing home care. The National Institutes of Health estimates that greater use of this medicine could save more than $100 million a year. For patients and their families, the drug means being saved from the agony of permanent brain damage.

If we can keep up the momentum of research, we may be able to reduce the $100 billion annual cost of Alzheimer's disease—which is expected to triple by the middle of the next century—unless we come up with a cure. Fortunately, pharmaceutical companies are researching 23 new medicines for Alzheimer's, and researchers at one company recently identified a key enzyme in the disease.

Not all innovations will save dollars. Some promising cancer research, centers on medicines that may be able to turn cancer into a manageable disease—one that would require lifetime treatment with innovative medicines. While this would be wonderful news for anyone who has—or will ever get—cancer, the economic implications could cause heartburn in managed care executives.

Perhaps it's time to stop listening to the doomsday dirges of the insurance industry. The explosion in pharmaceutical innovation is good news, not bad. Health care has undergone a sea change—the hospital bed and the surgeon's knife are no longer its primary tools. They've been eclipsed by pharmaceutical therapies that open a whole new world of hope for better, healthier lives. Our thinking needs to undergo a sea change too—if we want to realize these hopes. We need to encourage the research that will lead to more innovative medicines, not discourage it with pound-foolish laments about spiraling drug costs. The future of health care is too important to be left to the folks with the green eyeshades.

PhRMA

Alan F. Holmer is President of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, which represents the country's leading research-based pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies.

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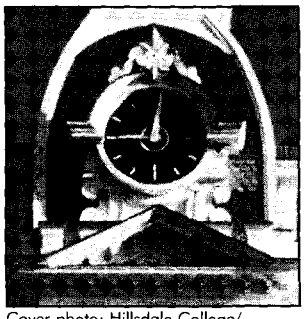

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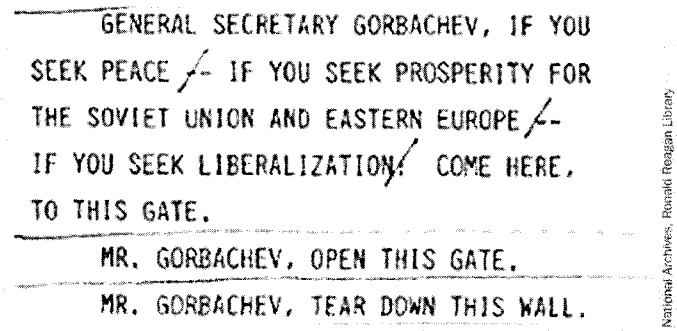
Giving Ronald Reagan His Due

The celebrations last week marking the tenth anniversary of the Berlin Wall's collapse were marred by what seemed at times a willful refusal to give Ronald Reagan proper credit for his contribution to the triumph of freedom in Europe.

A *Washington Post* editorial, written in an oddly dispirited and passive voice, was sadly typical: "The American side," said the *Post*, by way of explaining our historic victory in the Cold War, "had come to be widely seen as a society of values honorable and serviceable for challenge. Ronald Reagan by intuition and Mikhail Gorbachev by logic set the dissolution on course."

But intuition had nothing to do with it. Throughout his presidency, Ronald Reagan offered a sustained and ultimately successful political argument against Communist tyranny. It was a feat of high statesmanship much derided at the time, even reviled as warmongering in many quarters. The rhetorical high point of his campaign came in Berlin, before the Brandenburg Gate, on June 12, 1987. Here is part of what he said that day: "After these four decades, then, there stands before the entire world one great and inescapable conclusion: Freedom leads to prosperity. Freedom replaces the ancient hatreds among the nations with comity and peace. Freedom is the victor.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MR. GORBACHEV, OPEN THIS GATE.

MR. GORBACHEV, TEAR DOWN THIS WALL.

National Archives, Ronald Reagan Library

Reagan's speech card for his remarks at the Brandenburg Gate, June 12, 1987.

"Now the Soviets themselves may, in a limited way, be coming to understand the importance of freedom. We hear much from Moscow about a new policy of reform and openness. . . . We welcome change and openness, for we believe that freedom and security go together, that the advance of human liberty can only strengthen the cause of world peace. There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace.

"General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here, to this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."

The official festivities in Berlin last week consisted mainly of effusions of gratitude to Mikhail Gorbachev from former president George Bush and former chancellor Helmut Kohl, for Gorbachev's having refrained from ordering a massacre as the Wall fell. Ronald Reagan, who was obviously unable to be there, deserved better than to be the ghost at the banquet. Here, then, is how he prophetically concluded his famous 1987 speech:

"As I looked out a moment ago from the Reichstag, that embodiment of German unity, I noticed words crudely spray-painted upon the wall, perhaps by a young Berliner, 'This wall will fall. Beliefs become reality.' Yes, across Europe, this wall will fall. For it cannot withstand faith. It cannot withstand truth. The wall cannot withstand freedom." ♦

Bush vs. Forbes on China

George W. Bush is giving a major foreign policy address at the Reagan Library on Friday, Nov. 19. The Scrapbook looks forward to his thoughts on U.S. policy towards China. If he plans on sounding tough, he may want to alert Uncle Prescott before he signs too many embarrassing consulting deals with Chinese companies. As the *South China Morning Post* reported last week, "The brother of former U.S. president George Bush has been hired as a consultant by a company in Zhejiang province. The Xiaoshan-based Wanxiang Group, which produces industrial bearings, wanted Prescott Bush to help expand its business in the United States, company spokesman Cheng Jie said yesterday.

"Mr. Bush had not been given specific responsibilities and would be paid according to his contribution, said Mr. Cheng. 'He doesn't have set responsibilities. When we need his help, we will contact him. . . .' The company hired Mr. Bush because of his wide connections. Mr. Cheng said: 'He has many friends. Even though he may not be involved in the same field as we are, he can go to his friends for help in resolving our issues.'"

Coincidentally, Steve Forbes gave the best speech of his campaign at the Nixon Library last Friday, precisely on the need to take a firmer stance in talks with Beijing. "We need to begin using

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the economic and diplomatic tools at our disposal to effect real change in China," said Forbes: "tough sanctions on Chinese military-owned companies, tough sanctions on Chinese companies using slave labor, tough sanctions on Chinese companies trafficking in weapons of mass destruction, and continuous, high-profile condemnations of Chinese human rights abuses."

Public opinion, by the way, is with Forbes. Before Congress rubber stamps a trade deal with China, it may want to ponder the latest Reuters poll, showing two-thirds of Americans opposing freer trade with China unless Beijing improves its human rights record. ♦

Great Moments in Clintonian Diplomacy

As reported by the *Washington Post*'s Steven Mufson and Robert G. Kaiser:

"Clinton put his arm around the considerably smaller [Chinese premier Zhu Rongji], according to a Chinese diplomat's account, and told him: 'If you really need this now, we can do it [welcome China into the World Trade Organization]. It's hard for me to do it now, it's a bad time politically, but if you really need it, we can do it. Do you really need it now?' Zhu, dismayed but unwilling to be a supplicant, said he didn't." ♦

More Great Moments in Clintonian Diplomacy

As reported by the German press agency Deutsche Presse-Agentur:

"U.S. President Bill Clinton tried to look up an old girlfriend this week while visiting Oslo for the Mideast summit, the Israeli tabloid Yedioth Ahronoth claimed Friday.

"U.S. diplomats 'turned Oslo upside down' to find the woman Clinton had not been able to forget since touring Europe as a student 30 years ago. When they found her, she thought hard and said: 'Clinton? I don't recall ever meeting someone of that name,' Yedioth reported. Israeli Minister for International Relations Shimon Peres said Clinton had described how he asked Ambassador to Norway David Hermelin to see if he could find the former contact, the paper said." ♦

Trumping the Constitution

Not that it was going anywhere, but Donald Trump's much-buzzed-about plan to impose a 14.25 percent wealth tax is probably unconstitutional. The Constitution originally permitted Congress to impose direct taxes only in proportion to each state's population. That's why the income tax was declared unconstitutional in 1895. The Sixteenth Amendment in 1913 changed all that. It conferred on Congress the power "to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States and without regard to any census or enumeration." Read that again: Incomes may be taxed without apportionment. Wealth cannot. THE SCRAPBOOK suspects that The Donald's wealth is exaggerated. But surely he can still afford to employ a constitutional lawyer. ♦

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Casual

Love in Bloom

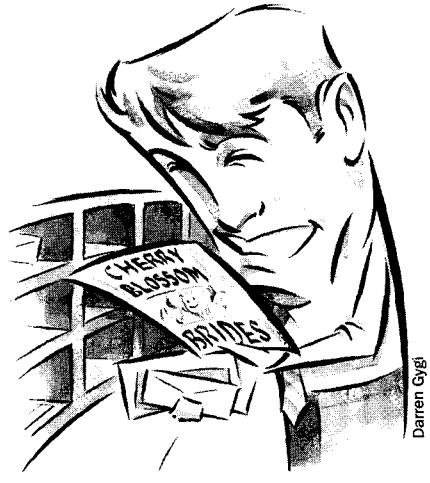
As Thanksgiving approaches, I am once again taking inventory of blessings large (good health, loving family, gift certificate to the Outback) and pleasures small (children's laughter, a whippoorwill's song, Internet porn). But it was while sorting through my mail some weeks ago that I most acutely felt gratitude.

Mail-check time at the office is frequently mail-chuck time, as we toss, unopened, turgid think-tank backgrounders and treatises on the proper use of semicolons sent by over-caffeinated readers. But I have also come to expect surprises, often supplied by my friends in the business department, gifts that they hope, in the spirit of collegiality, will scandalize the interns and/or get me fired. Recently, one of them planted a Cherry Blossoms mail-order brides catalog in my box. For some reason, before I got far plotting vengeance by signing them up for the North American Man-Boy Love Association newsletter, I was overcome with curiosity. How lonely must a soul grow before turning to the Cherry Blossoms?

I am married five years, but in my single days, I don't remember ever being quite that desperate. Growing up in a Texas church youth-group culture, one could always bank on modest success by going to the autumn hayride, which was rife with viceless, overripe Baptist girls, souped-up on wassail and primed for singalongs and heavy petting. During college, I saw real masters at work, as bloated fratboys demonstrated subtle courtship techniques which went something like: Boy meets girl. Boy chats up girl. Boy slips gamma hydroxybutyrate into girl's rum'n'Coke and sneaks her to his car before she regains consciousness.

Part of the fun of being married, of course, is the *Schadenfreude* from watching single friends flail helplessly: Like the acquaintance who'd take his dates, and his cassette player, to hot-sheet motels. At the magic moment, he'd pop in Foreigner's "Feels Like the First Time," believing wine coolers and classic rock were catnip to the ladies.

Then there's John, a scampish Romeo who, while standing at a bar recently, pitching his best woo, was informed by the object of his affection



Darren Gygi

that she'd never date a man "whose butt is smaller than mine." Looking around the room, John mischievously replied, "Darlin', that would eliminate just about every man in here." Powell and Loy it wasn't, but John thought he'd gotten off a real corker. (Fair Juliet disagreed, and slugged his glasses into a stranger's draft beer.)

I do not miss episodes like these. At 29, having recently witnessed the birth of my first son, I sometimes feel on the fast track to what Sinclair Lewis called the "paralyzing contentment of middle age." Perhaps that is why I occasionally tax sanity's limits, such as when I rent three videos instead of two on Blockbuster nights. But the fun couples at Cherry Blossoms are an antidote to any restlessness.

The mostly Filipina and Eastern bloc buttercups who populate the catalog are a surprisingly comely lot, and will grow only more so as they are introduced to American orthodontia and electrolysis. Pictures of their lonely American suitors—targeted through ideal lonely-guy venues, such as classified ads in political magazines—suggest they hail from the fallen-arches/bad mustache side of the gene pool. But marriage, even mail-order marriage, is a compact, bringing mutual sacrifice and benefit.

Thus, the Cherry Blossoms groom will surrender his habit of uttering awkward pick-up lines at Bennigan's happy hours, in favor of bribing immigration officials to secure exotic arm candy. And brides will forsake their corrugated tin shacks and 11 siblings in hopes of bearing some *gaijin*'s homely children and driving a Land Cruiser.

But all's not chocolate and roses. In Cherry Blossoms' special-order book, *How To Meet Exciting Ladies From All Over the World*, men are warned, before visiting their foreign brides, "Be prepared for the squat toilet, and if there's no toilet paper, look around for a bucket of water with a ladle, which you are to use along with left hand in place of toilet paper."

That's a level of commitment rarely seen in this country. And the blossoms themselves are stalwart, demanding in broken-English ads only that their mate be "not dope fiend." Adhering to these strictures may win a lucky groom one Lena from Moscow, who "want to acquaint with honest, provided, merry man for serious treatment. I'm looking understanding. I do exercise at one's leisure."

I now recommend this book to single friends and, consequently, have few of them left. But the book has made me thankful that for me, love struck early and the search is over. I expect it will stay that way. Not only does my wife speak beautiful English and have remarkably tartar-free teeth, but she regularly purchases toilet paper. Besides, I am not dope fiend.

Matt Labash

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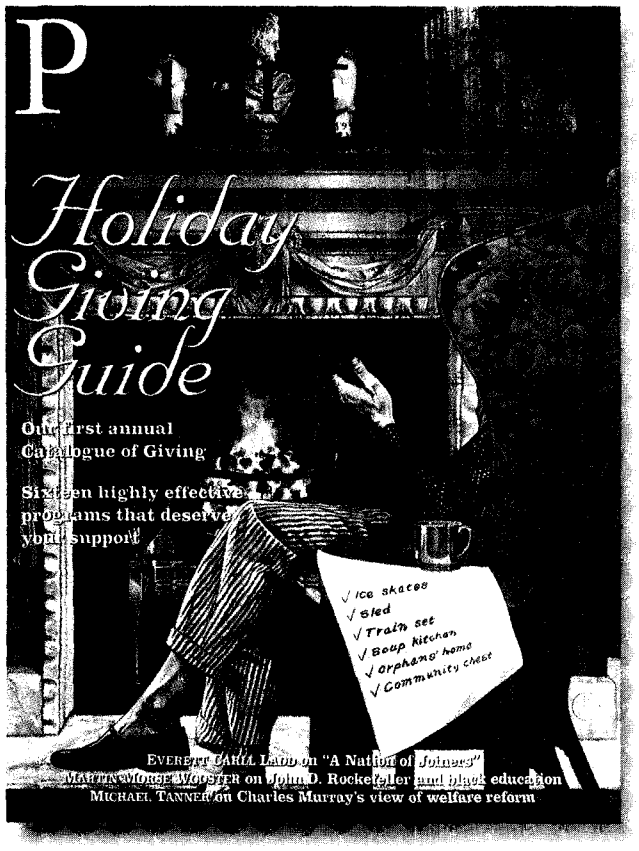

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Correspondence

On the Lamb

Three "hips" and a loud "hurrah" to David Brooks for his article on Brian Lamb and C-SPAN ("Brian Lamb's America," Nov. 8). Lamb and his C-SPAN colleagues awaken keen interest in matters historical because they make history both interesting and accessible.

As an academic, I've nearly given up on seeing many in my profession produce much beyond turgid prose about obscure topics of little interest or relevance to anyone but themselves. No wonder students are often bored out of their skulls. But those who would liven up the classroom and actually get a broad spectrum of students interested in history should be warned: They may be accused of "entertaining" the students, an offense seemingly as grievous as a guffaw during a Puritan prayer session.

History is, by its very nature, interesting. And it should, by its very nature, be entertaining. But telling a good story well requires a knack for storytelling (as those biographers Brooks mentioned who were frustrated novelists know all too well). Lamb brings that out in his interviewing. Now, if he could only somehow manage to reach into the halls of ivy . . .

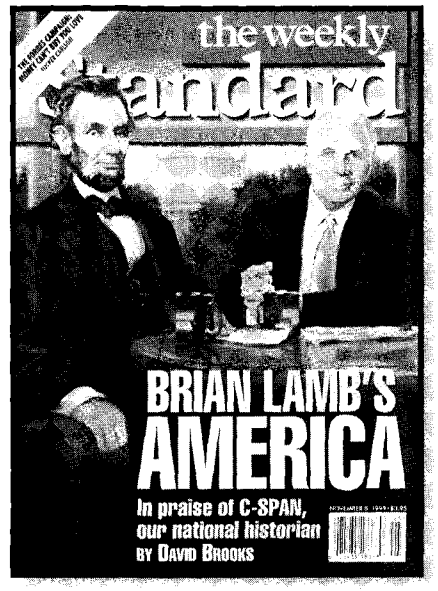
Ron McCoy
Associate Professor of History
Emporia State University
Emporia, KS

Forbes FYI

As national chairman of Forbes 2000, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to Tucker Carlson's piece on our campaign ("Money Can't Buy You Love," Nov. 8). It's unfortunate that so much paper and so much ink went to so much waste.

Carlson is certainly not alone in his obsession with national polls, but your readers should not be so brazenly misled. There is no national primary in either political party and therefore national polls mean little. Better to examine the numbers in Iowa, where Steve Forbes began in the low single-digits early this year, rose into the twenties through late summer, and now—according to renowned independent pollster John Zogby—is within just 10 points of Gov. Bush. It was Steve Forbes who showcased an extraordinary organization at the Iowa Straw Poll that led to his strong second place finish there. Meanwhile in New Hampshire, the focus has been on John McCain, but Steve Forbes has quietly risen into double digits.

Still, there is much more to covering a campaign than polls. There is also the sense of how a candidate is playing around the country. Carlson wasn't in Ames, Iowa, for the straw poll, and perhaps that is why he failed to mention the 5,000 people who came out for Steve Forbes that day. Nor does he mention how Steve Forbes's crowds have been



dwarfing Sen. McCain's in New Hampshire. In the week following the second New Hampshire debate Steve Forbes drew 650 people in Sun City, Arizona, 600 more in Sioux City, Iowa, and another 400 the next night in Waterloo, Iowa. Not to mention the crowds of 1,000 and 1,200 Forbes drew respectively in Modesto and Fresno, California, during his last trip west.

Perhaps, just perhaps, all of these people realize that Steve Forbes remains the only candidate who has the message, the organizational muscle, and the financial resources to compete with and defeat Gov. Bush. It is Gov. Bush who has seen his poll numbers drop specifically because of the indifference he has shown toward rank-and-file Republican voters. He has no clear message, he dodges the issues and ducks debates, and—for good measure—he recently distanced himself from conservatives.

Perhaps, for his next assignment, Carlson could examine why a front-runner who is well under 50 percent in the first two key states would employ such a loopy strategy. Time and again Republicans have proven—and this magazine has concurred—that when they run on conservative principles they win, and when they run on mush they lose.

The contrast with Steve Forbes couldn't be more striking. Steve Forbes has outlined clear, coherent, conservative policies on the pressing issues of the day: Social Security, health care, taxes, and education. He has stepped up to the plate on the issue of life with a clear plan of action to rid our country of the horror of abortion: He will ban partial-birth abortion, pass parental consent legislation, appoint judges who will respect the sanctity of human life, and his running mate, like himself, will be pro-life. And, for good measure, three of the four opponents who shared the stage with Steve Forbes in the New Hampshire debates publicly stated their support for the flat tax.

The Weekly Standard has an obligation to provide accurate coverage and insightful analysis of campaign 2000. Carlson's article on Steve Forbes provided neither, and therefore your readers got short shrift. President Reagan enjoyed needling Democrats by pointing out that "facts are stubborn things." You would do well to honor his words.

J. Kenneth Blackwell
Chairman, Forbes 2000
Columbus, OH

• • •

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the weekly Standard

Partial Birth Revisited

No one any longer contends, as Kate Michelman of NARAL did when initially confronted on the subject in the fall of 1995, that "there is no such thing as a partial birth"—in other words, that the hideous abortion procedure in question is an outright hoax perpetrated by the pro-life movement. At other times, during those earliest few months of the controversy, Planned Parenthood and the National Abortion Federation (NAF) were prepared to argue that partial birth is an unusually humane means of terminating a pregnancy—because before the skull is punctured by surgical scissors and the brains suctioned out through the wound, the unwanted child is always already dead or insensible from a pain-free overdose of the anesthesia administered to its mother. This neat theory, too, has by now disappeared from public debate. In 1996 and 1997, President Clinton sealed his vetoes of congressional partial-birth bans by indignantly insisting that in cases of fetal hydrocephaly, "the only way" a mother can avoid being ripped "to shreds" during labor and thus "losing the ability to ever bear further children" is to have the fluid-swollen head of her baby (which "couldn't live" anyway) vacuumed down to size. But you don't much hear *this* defense of the procedure any more, either.

The partial-birth battle's front line has shifted from Congress to the federal courts—where new distortions have replaced old lies.

All of these claims were demonstrably untrue even at the time they were made. Dr. Martin Haskell of Dayton, Ohio, the pioneer of partial-birth abortion, first described his innovation, in elaborate detail, to a 1992 meeting of the NAF. He did not mention using general anesthesia as an agent of fetal demise; in fact, a principal advantage of the technique, he pointed out, was that it did *not* require general anesthesia. Nor did Haskell pretend to choose the procedure out of case-by-case concern for the health of women who came to his clinic. Instead, he "routinely" performed partial-birth abortions on "all patients" between 20 and 24 weeks pregnant. Eighty percent of these abortions, Haskell told the AMA's newsletter in 1993, were "purely elective." The other 20 percent were for "genetic reasons" like Down syndrome that pose no risk to a mother.

Hydrocephaly, incidentally, President Clinton's favorite justification for partial-birth abortion, is *not*, in fact, inevitably fatal to an infant. And no reputable perinatologist would ever think to treat the condition—on behalf of the infant or its mother—by suctioning the baby's skull. The standard procedure is delivery by Caesarean section, followed by a neurosurgical shunt of fluid from the newborn's brain. Where C-section is inadvisable, excess cranial fluid can be drained from the fetus, in utero, by a needle through the mother's abdomen, and a normal vaginal delivery can then occur.

None of this incontestable evidence has ever mattered to pro-choice dogmatists, who still do not bother to acknowledge its existence. Falsehoods like the president's hydrocephaly straw man helped blunt the campaign for a federal prohibition of partial-birth abortion (Clinton's vetoes were both times narrowly sustained). The lies served their purpose, that is. So why, then, have they since been largely discarded by the liars? They have been discarded just as cynically as they were once advanced—simply because they are no longer convenient. For in recent years the partial-birth battle's front line has shifted away from Congress to the federal courts. And in this new venue, the better to protect its weirdly beloved sub-genre of surgical sadism, the abortion rights movement has fashioned an altogether fresh set of distortions.

Which distortions, sad to say, have proved remarkably effective. Since 1995, more than half the nation's state legislatures have managed to enact their own, local bans on partial-birth abortion. But all but seven of the bans have been formally challenged on constitutional grounds. And only once in all this mass of litigation has the trial judge upheld a state's partial-birth restriction. In every other district-court ruling, the judge has accepted highly questionable evidence from abortion practitioners and their lawyers, confusingly applied that evidence to the Supreme Court's already confused abortion precedents, and invalidated a worthy and popular law.

In 1995, for example, Ohio became the first state to bar partial-birth abortion—there defined as "purposely insert-

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ing a suction device into the skull of a fetus to remove the brain." Ohio's law contained a health exception. But the plaintiff—Dr. Haskell himself, as it happens—presented testimony concerning a practice previously unknown to medicine. Partial-birth procedures, it was contended, are not the only abortions in which a baby's head is sucked empty. Sometimes the deed is done in dilation and evacuation (D&E) abortions, too, so as more efficiently to reduce and remove a dismembered skull from the womb. Since Ohio's partial-birth ban thus "restricted" D&Es, as well, and since D&Es remain the most common and "safest" way to end a second-trimester pregnancy, the district court agreed with Haskell that the law raised an unconstitutional obstacle to lowest-risk abortion. Despite the law's health exception. And despite the fact that there isn't even a speck of authoritative medical evidence that brain-suctioning ever makes an abortion safer. On close inspection, this ruling made no sense. But it was later upheld by the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Similarly bogus complaints have defeated every other state's partial-birth restriction in every other federal trial court. Every other state, that is, except Wisconsin. In Wisconsin, Planned Parenthood asked U.S. District Judge John C. Shabaz to find that the state's partial-birth ban violated various constitutional principles never explicitly announced by the Supreme Court. No state may forbid the use of any abortion technique, no matter how extreme or ugly, on a pre-viable fetus, Planned Parenthood suggested. No state may forbid such a technique on a *viable* fetus without granting a health exception for any doctor who decides, all by himself, that partial birth is the best way to go. And no state may forbid a procedure whose described elements at all overlap with other kinds of abortion.

In the service of this last "vagueness" argument, Judge Shabaz was subjected at trial to hair-raising testimony by Planned Parenthood's Wisconsin plaintiff physicians and their outside expert witness: Dr. Martin Haskell. No more, it seems, is partial birth a rare and humane form of abortion. Its defenders now admit that it is grotesque. And they assert that precisely because of its most obvious grotesquerie—the single-minded assault on an infant's cranium—partial birth cannot be morally or legally distinguished from abortion techniques universally acknowledged to enjoy absolute constitutional protection.

Dr. Haskell told Judge Shabaz that he sometimes starts a partial-birth abortion, gets the baby's body out in the air, wiggling around, all except the head, but for some reason can't effect a brain suction. So instead he simply reaches through the mother's cervix with forceps and crushes the baby's skull—like a "folded piece of cardboard." Which is also, Haskell claimed, what doctors performing standard second-trimester D&E abortions invariably do. After a D&E dismemberment, "usually the last part to be removed is the skull itself and it's floating around free inside the uterine cavity . . . rather like a ping-pong ball." A D&E abortionist has to crush that ping-pong ball, Haskell said; there's no other way to get it past the woman's cervix. Planned Parenthood's logic, then: Partial-birth abortions must sometimes crush a fetus's head; nothing that happens in a D&E abortion may be constitutionally restricted by any state; D&Es must sometimes crush a fetus's head; so partial-birth procedures may not be constitutionally restricted by any state.

Bucking the national trend, Judge Shabaz, to his credit, was unimpressed by nonsense like this. He was persuaded instead by the testimony of Wisconsin's expert witness—a distinguished (and otherwise pro-choice) perinatologist, Dr. Harlan Giles—that an infant's skull need never be collapsed to achieve its complication-free delivery, even in an abortion. Shabaz, in short, was persuaded that partial-birth is never a medically necessary or even preferable method to end a pregnancy, and that states may consequently ban it without imposing an unconstitutional "undue burden" on women's abortion rights. Other safe abortions will remain available in every circumstance, the judge determined; Planned Parenthood's fear that Wisconsin's law prohibits many different kinds of abortion is "a demon of their own creation." Earlier this year, Shabaz upheld that law.

And just last month, in a 5-4 majority opinion by Judge Frank Easterbrook, the Seventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals sustained Shabaz. Easterbrook's meticulously argued ruling has been poorly reported in the mainstream media. Most newspaper coverage has been directed instead—admiringly—to a characteristically flamboyant dissent by Judge Richard Posner. Posner likens the "dubious" Dr. Harlan Giles to a quack who believes that "vitamins are worthless." Posner is captivated by an imaginary "consensus of medical opinion" that partial-birth abortions are a valuable life-and-health-preserving technique. Posner complains that the entire controversy has been "whipped up" merely to "dramatize the ugliness of abortions." Abortions are *not* that ugly, he concludes. In any pregnancy, "as long as the baby remains within the mother's body, it poses a potential threat to her life or health." The baby is an enemy. Abortion is our best defense.

Needless to say, we are convinced that Posner is wrong and that Shabaz and Easterbrook are right. But the question remains: Will the Supreme Court agree with us? With last month's Seventh Circuit ruling, the federal appellate courts have badly split over the constitutional issues raised by partial-birth abortion. The Supreme Court is now obliged to step in and resolve this split. But the current court retains a pro-choice majority and inherits a quarter-century of abortion precedents notable for loophole-ridden incoherence. All of which is a bad omen. The only long-term guarantee for an ordered and ethical national abortion regime, it therefore seems to us, is the election of a pro-life president in the year 2000—a president who will appoint new, pro-life justices to the nation's highest court.

—David Tell, for the Editors

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A Democratic House for President Bush

Republican strategists now fear that even a Bush victory won't save the GOP House. BY FRED BARNES

HERE'S HOW BADLY Republican prospects for holding the House of Representatives in 2000 have deteriorated: A new poll suggests that even a solid victory in the presidential race by George W. Bush wouldn't guarantee GOP control. "Everyone is trying to put the best face on it," says a Republican operative. But there is a mood of alarm among Republicans. It was reflected in the presence of Maria Cino at a strategy session in Washington in early November. Cino lives in Austin, Texas, where she is the political director of Bush's campaign. She was a top campaign adviser to House Republicans in the heady years leading up to 1994, when they took over the House. Now, the headiness is gone, and Republicans need help. The assessment that came out of the meeting with Cino is that Republicans will lose the House by five or six seats.

Six months ago, after experiencing a post-impeachment surge in popularity, Republicans figured they'd keep the House, despite the slimness of their current majority, just five votes. Polls showed they'd reached parity with Democrats on voter preference for the House in 2000. The man many Republicans thought had caused a lot of their troubles in Congress, Newt Gingrich, was gone. And Tom Davis of Virginia, the chairman of the House Republican Congressional Committee, was credited with recruiting strong candidates for open and vulnerable Democratic seats next year.

Things changed quickly. The issue agenda turned sharply against Republicans. Their best issues—crime, welfare, national security—are dormant. Their hopes of galvanizing voters with a $792 billion tax cut were dashed when an effort to market the tax measure over the summer failed to stir grass-roots enthusiasm. President Clinton then vetoed the measure with impunity, and Republicans aren't sure why the tax fight turned out as it did. The best explanation is that millions of taxpayers are flush with earnings from stock market gains and don't feel pinched by taxes. Absent a market crash, this will remain true in 2000.

Anyway, the Democratic agenda took over: gun control, health care, education, Social Security, Medicare. When these issues are front and center, Republicans play defense. Speaker Dennis Hastert has done his best to minimize the harm. His strategy is to "get as many [Democratic bills] as possible off the table this year," says an adviser. But several, notably the patients' bill of rights and gun control, will be back in 2000. Under Hastert, Republicans also took the edge off the Social Security and education issues. But these remain Democratic themes, and the best Republicans can do is neutralize them.

Most alarming of all to Republicans is the Democrats' single-minded focus on winning back the House. Minority leader Richard Gephardt has talked numerous Democrats out of retiring or running for higher office, thereby reducing the number of open Democratic seats that are easier for Republicans to win. Republican retirements, in contrast, have soared.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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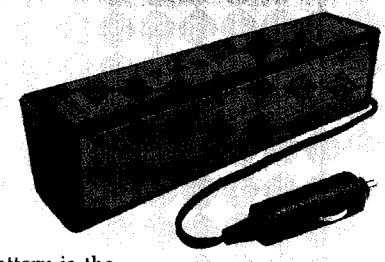

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Of the 24 open House seats, 19 are Republican. In at least 3 of the GOP seats, Democrats are favored. Republicans have a good shot now only at the Michigan seat being vacated by Debbie Stabenow, who's running for the Senate. Among GOP incumbents, one is in deep trouble (Merrill Cook of Utah) and a few others in jeopardy.

The Democrats' concentration on the House is even more evident in fund-raising and outside help. Democrats have little chance of taking the Senate (now 55-45 Republican) and they're pessimistic about the White House. So they're channeling money to the House. Labor is targeting three dozen Republican seats. "The union operation is already ginned up," says GOP pollster Frank Luntz. "I see no equivalent operation by business. If you think unions were effective in 1996 and 1998, it's nothing compared to what they'll do in 2000."

The 1999 election results didn't give Republicans any encouragement either. In 1993, Republican George Allen won a smashing victory for governor of Virginia, running on conservative themes that GOP congressional candidates repeated a year later. The 1993 results were a precursor to triumph in 1994. This year, Republicans narrowly won the legislature in Virginia but lost elsewhere. The Mississippi governor's race was the key test. Republican Mike Parker ran on personality and leadership. Lieutenant governor Ronnie Musgrove ran on education and quality of life issues, stirred a large black turnout, and won. Republicans should pray 1999 wasn't a precursor.

House Republicans have a designated savior, Bush. They assume he'll be the GOP presidential nominee, though that's hardly a certainty. "If Bush wins by 8 points or more, we probably retain the House," a Republican strategist says. "If it's 6 points or less, we start to get into trouble. If it's 7 points, flip a coin." This may be optimistic. In a September poll, Luntz asked if voters favored a Republican president and a Democratic Congress, and 12 percent said yes. "That scared the hell out of me," Luntz said. "It shows how Gov. Bush can carry the White House by 10 or 12 points and Republicans still lose the House."

Bush may yet play godfather to House Republicans. His aides have told GOP strategists that he doesn't want his agenda stymied by a Democratic House. In Texas, he faces exactly that, and one result was a substantially pared-down tax cut and modified education program. To avert this, Bush has promised to direct a disproportionate amount of general election spending to 30 pivotal House districts. The money—a minimum of $30 million—would go for TV ads and organizing. This could help, and heaven knows Republicans need it. ♦

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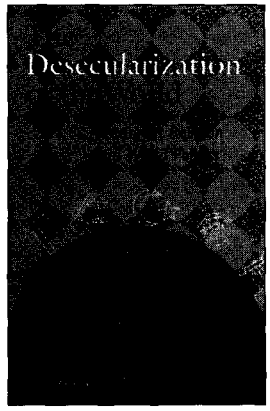

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Microsoft, Macroconfusion

Don't like the case against Bill Gates? Blame the law, not the Justice Department. BY JAMES HIGGINS

THE FIRST PART of the decision in *U.S.* v. *Microsoft* is in. Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson excoriated Microsoft as a bullying monopolist in his findings of fact released November 5. These findings came as a surprise to some, although it is difficult to discern why they should be at all surprising to anyone who followed the trial. Judge Jackson evidently became more and more fed up throughout the trial at Microsoft's antics: a falsified product demonstration, chest-thumping internal e-mails, and Bill Gates's Clintonesque suggestion in a videotaped deposition that he did not know what he meant by some of his own e-mails.

Most conservatives who believe in free markets, starting with the redoubtable editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*, have expressed scorn for the government's case against Microsoft. Believers in free markets quite reasonably view the Clinton administration—the people who would have given us HillaryCare—as pathological liberals who want to bludgeon Microsoft for the very reason that the company and its founder have been so successful. But a minority of conservatives (including such knowledgeable commentators as Judge Robert Bork, former FTC chairman Daniel Oliver, and WEEKLY STANDARD contributing editor Irwin M. Stelzer) have argued that the government's case is well founded.

Why is there this division among conservatives, and why has the division caused more heat than light?

For decades conservatives have proclaimed a dedication to the rule of law. Liberals have, to great and infuriating effect, used activist courts to subvert laws that were otherwise unlikely to be changed. For example, it is hard to imagine any state that would have adopted quota and preference schemes legislatively. It is even harder to imagine majorities in both houses of Congress and in three-quarters of the state legislatures concurrently approving a constitutional amendment that would have created Harry Blackmun's phantasmagorical "right to privacy." So liberals secured these things through the courts.

It would be unfortunate if conservatives started succeeding at the same game: securing favorable court rulings based not on what the law says but rather on what they believe it ought to say. This tension between what the law does say and what it ought to say underlies the full-throated differences among conservatives on the matter of Microsoft.

It is not widely recognized that the notion of "free and competitive markets" has two distinct meanings and origins. On most policy questions these two meanings lead to identical conclusions: for free trade, against taxation, against price controls, against market-distorting regulations. But the two meanings do not lead to the same conclusion in the Microsoft case.

The first meaning, the one proba-

James Higgins is a partner in a private equity firm in New York.

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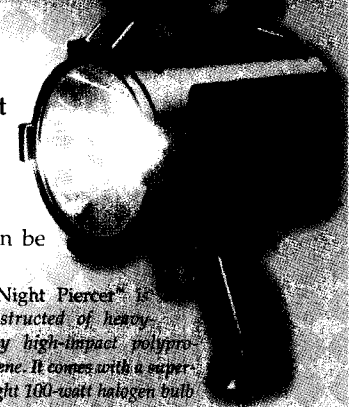

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bly most familiar to believers in free markets, is laissez-faire. The empirical case for this view was best put by Adam Smith with his famed argument that the "invisible hand" would guide even the most selfish and predatory competitor toward behavior that is good for the larger society—even if that competitor has no such good intentions himself.

The second model of a market is what economists call "perfect competition"—leading, in principle, to maximum economic welfare. This may sound like the same thing as laissez-faire, but it isn't. "Perfect competition" has a number of technical attributes, but the ones most salient to the Microsoft case assert that under "perfect competition," everyone selling a good or service is a "price-taker." In other words the overall market has so many sellers and buyers that no individual participant can affect price levels, leaving each seller the choice of selling at the market price or not selling at all. That model does not describe the existing market for personal computer operating systems, where Microsoft's market share has been estimated to be as high as 97 percent.

United States antitrust law has its roots in the pursuit of "perfect competition," not in the spirit of laissez-faire. The Sherman Act of 1890 states quite clearly that "every contract, combination . . . or conspiracy, in restraint of trade or commerce . . . is . . . declared to be illegal." The Sherman Act goes on to outlaw "monopoliz[ing], or attempt[ing] to monopolize . . . any part of . . . trade or commerce." Those are exactly the things that the Justice Department alleged and that Judge Jackson found Microsoft to have done.

Whether Jackson found the facts correctly in this case will be the subject of debate for decades. But in reading his findings, it's hard to escape concluding that he is indeed measuring Microsoft's actions against the statutes as they stand.

Does that mean the Microsoft antitrust case represents good public policy? Not necessarily. Bill Gates would no doubt argue that he (like John D. Rockefeller before him) brought order and lower prices and popular accessibility to a chaotic industry. Pre-Microsoft, getting a new computer to work often meant wading through books of techno-gibberish instructions. Now that nearly every new computer arrives with Windows already installed, the buyer can often start work on a familiar software package within minutes of opening the box.

Bill Gates

Thomas Fluharty

Even if one assumes that Judge Jackson is correct about Microsoft's competitive practices and objectives, the history of the technology business suggests that the market would ultimately produce competitors to cut Microsoft down to size. The government's previous big, high-tech antitrust target was IBM, but that suit was finally dropped in 1982. Within a decade, IBM had been so swamped by challengers that its long-term solvency was in doubt. A very dominant market player's presence may prevent some head-to-head competitors from ever taking root, but that same presence will ultimately lead wilier competitors to circumvent existing business arrangements entirely. That is what the personal computer business did to IBM. Could Microsoft permanently escape the same result in the world of technology? Not likely, if history is any guide.

A belief that there is something fundamentally wrong about the government's attack on Microsoft ought to suggest to conservatives that they rethink existing antitrust laws. It may well be time to scrap or at least radically overhaul them. But so far there has been much more fuming over the behavior of the Justice Department. There have been countless editorials fulminating against the government's case, but no serious effort that I am aware of to amend the antitrust laws.

Not even a year has passed since liberals argued that Bill Clinton should not be impeached and removed from office because the process that brought him to trial involved not one but two sets of laws that liberals suddenly found they could not abide: the Independent Counsel Act and Clintonized sexual harassment law. No, conservatives replied correctly, the way to deal with laws we find unwise is to change them, not refuse to enforce them. In the Clinton case, his apologists said that laws can be ignored if we don't like them. It would be a pity for conservatives to take the same view in the Microsoft case. ♦

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Revolt of the Shareholders?

If the suit against Microsoft damages its stock price, there could be political fallout. BY DAVID FRUM

NO PRESIDENT SINCE Herbert Hoover has linked his fate so closely to the stock market as Bill Clinton, and unlike Hoover's bet, Clinton's has thus far paid off brilliantly. In fact, the 1990s have not been a time of unusual economic prosperity. The gross domestic product rose faster in the 1980s; personal incomes climbed at a more rapid clip in the 1950s and 1960s. But from the point of view of the nearly 80 million Americans who own securities, the 1990s have been a time of dazzling opulence, and it's on the happiness of these people that the Clinton administration's political success rests.

Remarkably enough, the contentment of those Americans who own shares in Microsoft seems hardly to have been ruffled by Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson's scathing findings of fact against their company. Microsoft's stock price dropped from $94 at the beginning of October to $89 a week after the ruling—not good, obviously, but hardly earthshaking. Microsoft investors seem to be influenced by the memory of the Standard Oil and AT&T antitrust suits: Within a decade of the split-up order in both cases, the combined value of the successor companies had multiplied by 1,000 percent or more.

Those analogies, however, may not be apt. The Baby Bells that flourished after the bustup of the old AT&T monopoly remained regional monopolies. Long-distance communication did become a competitive market, but falling prices there triggered an enormous increase in demand—something that seems unlikely to happen to the personal computer operating-system market. There is no upper limit on the amount human beings can talk, but how many computers can any one person own? As for Standard Oil, because of the sketchiness of accounting in those long-ago days, the company had never been accurately valued in the first place. As Ron Chernow points out in *Titan*, his biography of John D. Rockefeller, Standard Oil's divisions held vastly more cash than even Rockefeller himself knew. More to the point, each of the divisions was an embryonic stand-alone company: The assets of Standard Oil were divided, but not diminished. Henry Ford's Model T's fortuitously came rumbling off the assembly line at almost the very moment of the Standard breakup, and the fragments of the old kerosene monopoly quickly grew into two dozen gasoline-producing giants.

A share of today's Microsoft, by contrast, sells for a pricey 58 times earnings. The company's assets are already known and appreciated—some might even say overappreciated—by the shareholding public. And unlike Standard Oil, Microsoft is threatened not merely with dismemberment, but with the confiscation of its prime asset: the greatest prize of the Information Age, the operating system that runs 95 percent of the world's desktop computers. The remedy that Microsoft's opponents seem hungriest for is forced sharing of the Windows 98 source code, which would overnight turn a hugely profitable piece of software into an electronic commodity. The most relevant precedent for Microsoft's 93,850 shareholders under such a scenario might turn out to be not Standard Oil or AT&T, but Bayer and other German companies that had their U.S. patents stripped away from them in 1917. Once valuable properties were reduced overnight to worthlessness.

Of course, nobody can predict with any certainty how dire a fate awaits Microsoft because the Justice Department has not yet told the courts what remedy it is seeking. One reason for that closed-mouthedness may precisely be to allay the fears of shareholders until the last possible moment. One thing we know for sure about them: Most can afford to write a $1,000 check to a presidential candidate critical of Clinton's Justice Department if their danders really rise.

The Clinton administration may have deeper motives still for moving so stealthily. New Democrats benefit immensely—both politically and in cash—from the perception that they have abandoned the antibusiness animus of the days of Hubert Humphrey and Jimmy Carter. But while Democrats have suppressed the old itch to domineer and redistribute, they have not truly overcome it. What they no longer dare do through legislation and regulation, they have since 1995 attempted to do through the courts.

Call it the litigation arm of liberalism. Through it, cigarette advertising has effectively been abolished and tobacco taxes hiked via a negotiated deal with the industry. Some hope in this same way to impose new restrictions on guns, the Second Amendment notwithstanding. And now it is via litigatory liberalism that the Clinton administration aspires to resurrect the faded dream of industrial policy: a federal role in monitoring America's most valuable company and in managing its most strategic industry.

If the Clinton administration ever 'fessed up to this troubling ambition, it would scare the markets worse than a week of gloomy speeches by Alan Greenspan. The interesting political question is: If the broader markets ever do react, will the vast property-owning middle class that has forgiven Clinton so much forgive him this direct assault on their well-being? ♦

David Frum is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD. *His history of the 1970s will be published next year by Basic Books.*

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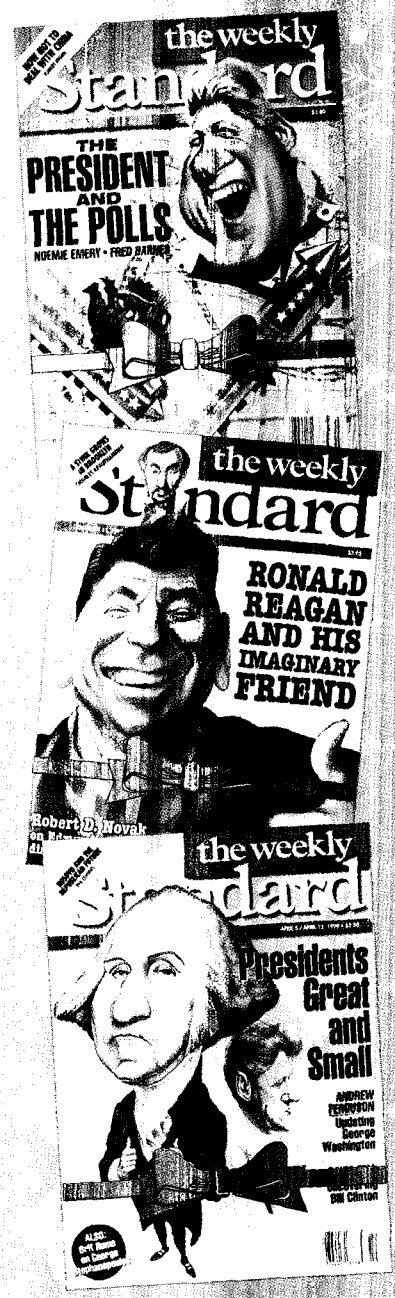

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Montenegro: The Next War?

Montenegrins contemplate independence—and another bloody Balkan conflict. BY JEFFREY GEDMIN

Podgorica, Montenegro

IF YOU WALK DOWN the tree-lined main boulevard in Podgorica, the diminutive capital of the tiny Yugoslav republic of Montenegro, you brush with vitality and affluence, albeit 1999 East European style. Restaurants and cafés are full. So are the smart-looking shops. A member of our delegation found elegant dress shoes she could buy at a fraction of what it would cost her back home in Berlin. She also could have bought them at 9 or 10 in the evening, an impossibility in her own country's still carefully regulated social market economy. Shops in Podgorica are bustling well after dark.

Evenings in this beautiful little town surrounded by the mountains are splendid. City authorities close off 10 straight blocks to traffic at nightfall and the promenade begins. Well-dressed people. Strikingly tall people, the women included. And hauntingly beautiful. Our advance man had informed us before we arrived—"there's something genetic going on here."

Montenegro is the last stop on a six-day fact-finding mission to the Balkans organized by the New Atlantic Initiative and the German Marshall Fund of the United States (Kosovo was the penultimate). But the last is not least. Everyone wants to know, Is Montenegro the next war?

There's a stirring intensity here. In the lobby of my hotel, Crna Gora ("the Black Mountain"), the desk clerk is cheering wildly at a small television set behind the counter. It's not a soccer match, but Podgorica's own live coverage of a session in the Montenegrin parliament. In the face of bitter opposition, the democratically elected government of 37-year-old Milo Djukanovic has just succeeded in pushing through a new law on Montenegrin citizenship—another little step toward independence from Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia, the dominant partner in the Yugoslav federation. Like many people in Podgorica, the staff is almost desperately friendly to Western visitors. You wonder if they are telling you in code, "Please don't forget us when the bloodshed begins." Otherwise, on the eve of the next conflict, things appear calm in this place of strange paradoxes.

On the one hand, Montenegrins, at least in the city, live quite well. Streets are filled with Western cars, and upscale models at that. Conversation seems to turn as much on the next espresso as it does on questions of war and peace. And there's a cheerfulness one encounters that stands in stark contrast to the postwar misery and tension that still dominate life in Kosovo. On the other hand, inflation may approach 100 percent by year's end and unemployment, by some estimates, is a staggering 80 percent. The economy, it turns out, is propped up by USAID money and a booming informal sector that includes a thriving smuggling industry, from cigarettes to drugs.

Although Djukanovic leads a pro-West government that opposes the rule of a Serbian tyrant and seeks association with the West, his country is still part of the Yugoslav Republic, and Djukanovic himself was, until recently, a close ally of President Milosevic. In 1989 Djukanovic played an important role, in fact, in helping to replace the old leadership of Montenegro with a pro-Milosevic one. In the current standoff with Belgrade, Djukanovic controls the country's customs service and a police force and militia that total some 18,000. Milosevic controls the Montenegrin armed forces, which are slightly larger in number.

How complicated can the situation be? During the Kosovo war, NATO hit Montenegrin airfields but avoided the naval port of Bar, Serbia's only bit of coastline on the Adriatic. Djukanovic helped convince the Yugoslav navy to avoid entering the conflict—and the United States thanked him for this by pledging an informal security guarantee for Montenegro. Since the war's end, Washington has also been working to exempt Montenegro from some of the sanctions being pressed on Yugoslavia, an understandably difficult task.

But there is still some truth in the phrase "Montenegro is Serbia." (This is the favorite terse warning of pro-Milosevic forces when the question of independence is posed—just as it once was for Kosovo.) In the First World War, Montenegrins sacrificed themselves to permit their Serb allies to retreat to Greece to regroup and fight again. In 1991 it was Montenegrin forces who were primarily responsible for the savage bombing and looting of Croatia's treasured city of Dubrovnik.

If this little republic of 620,000 emerges as the next Balkan killing fields, one can imagine that the fighting will be difficult and fierce. The terrain is mountainous; the fighting spirit legendary. The wiriest and the toughest seem to hail from Montenegro: the famous Yugoslav dissident Milovan Djilas, Milosevic's own father, the indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic (the trained psychiatrist who once acted as one of Milosevic's leading representatives in carrying out the atrocities in Bosnia).

On the trip wire of independence, Djukanovic's foreign minister,

Jeffrey Gedmin is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and executive director of the New Atlantic Initiative.

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Branko Perovic, says the government wants to avoid "clear deadlines" with Belgrade and would like to "postpone a referendum as long as possible." Predrag Bulatovic, the middle-aged apparatchik who leads the "moderate" wing of the pro-Milosevic party, hints at swift retribution, saying that independence means "we will respond equally." For now it's a game of chicken.

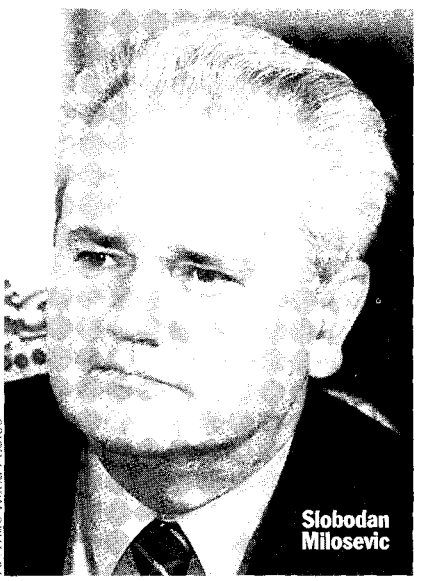
The Djukanovic government proposed a renegotiation of the relationship between Montenegro and Serbia in August. Milosevic refuses to reject the initiative out of hand and makes clear that independence is unacceptable. The government in Podgorica maintains a go-slow approach and at the same time continues to establish facts on the ground that spell eventual independence.

Most recently, Montenegro introduced the deutsche mark as a parallel currency to the Yugoslav dinar. Meanwhile, pro-Milosevic opposition leaders have helped initiate a new federal security service which would give Belgrade full control of all military and civilian intelligence in Montenegro. Tit for tat. Preparing for the showdown.

Milosevic could smother Montenegro if he wanted to (Serbia's population is 10 million). It's possible he will use this slender swath of land as his last stand to defend Greater Serbia. That is, Greater Serbia less the breakaway republics of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and the province of Kosovo. He might consider deploying the Yugoslav army, still smarting from its defeat in Kosovo, and, like Russian forces in Chechnya, looking for redemption and renewed self-esteem.

It's more likely, though, that Milosevic will quietly help unleash a civil war. In the pro-Milosevic north of the republic, Belgrade has already reportedly infiltrated some 2,000 paramilitary forces to prepare for the fight. In following this course, Milosevic would do what he does best: Strike, retreat, wait for the West to react, and then watch us wring our hands while we fret about what to do next.

No one believes that Djukanovic can postpone a decision on independence forever. Some government officials speculate on a referendum as early as spring. Polls indicate between 40 and 50 percent in favor and 40 percent against. If Djukanovic can spur the economy with the help of his new currency, he'll campaign hard for 60 percent support. It is possible that Djukanovic's real endgame is not independence, but rather to replace Milosevic himself.


AP-Wide World Photos

Slobodan Milosevic

In the meantime, the Serbian dictator will try to stir things up. Trouble in Montenegro may even help Milosevic divert attention from his own worsening economic and political crisis. "A cart is rolling down the hill, picking up speed," says Muhamed Sacirbey, Bosnian ambassador to the United Nations who has his own experience in dealing with Milosevic. "The question," says Sacirbey, "is when it will hit the wall."

So what will the West do? One adviser to the Blair government says "the Blair people put their foot down recently" when they learned that defense planners in London were conducting the politically incorrect exercise of thinking out intervention scenarios for Montenegro. As usual, secretary of state Madeleine Albright also enjoys being a hawk on the cheap. The administration promises more economic aid to Montenegro and support for the forces of "democratic change." But Albright opposes independence, and has little to say about Montenegro's security.

What's more, the administration refused to help Djukanovic raise the $40 million he pleaded for during his visit to Washington in early November to offset his depleting foreign reserves. Djukanovic had hoped that Washington's assistance would help gin up support from the Europeans who themselves have dithered from helping Montenegro, in part for fear of offending Russia.

In the end, intervention will be ugly. Yugoslav forces stationed inside Montenegro total 20,000 and are thought to be staunchly pro-Milosevic, at least at the commanding officers' level. Public opinion inside Montenegro will remain divided on independence. A new war will also mean a serious challenge to U.S. policy in the Balkans. Milosevic still plays a hand in Kosovo, offering moral and logistical support to Serb militants who seek to make life extremely difficult. In Mitrovica, a town in northern Kosovo, the Serbs have been consolidating their own de facto partition.

"Don't think it's impossible," says a senior NATO official, "for Milosevic to push his way back into Kosovo" at some point. Even in Bosnia, and even after the defeat in Kosovo, some Serbs still proudly fly the flag of Belgrade from their apartment balconies, making clear where their loyalties lie. A victory for Milosevic in Montenegro would radicalize Serb behavior throughout the region. More important, perhaps, it would undermine the nascent democratic opposition inside Serbia proper.

The Balkan madness began this decade when the butcher of Belgrade cut loose and an American administration concluded that the United States "had no dog in the fight." We're in it now. One way to avoid the next war? Tell Milosevic that if we have to intervene in Montenegro, we're finally coming to Belgrade. It's a visit long overdue. ♦

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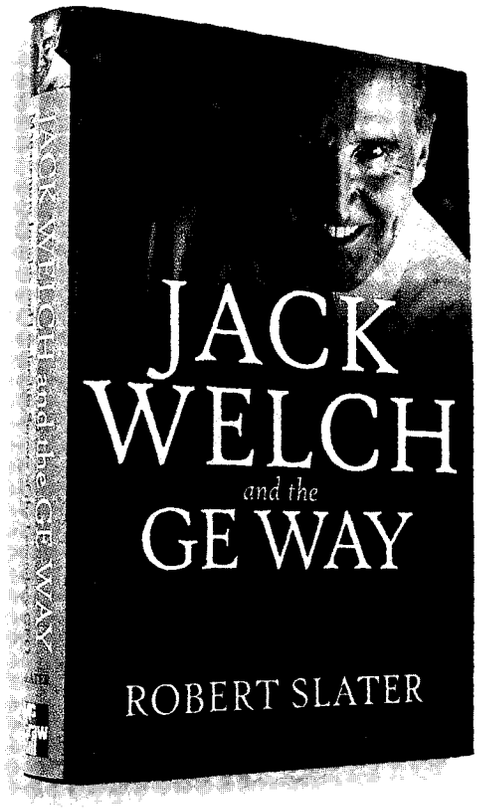

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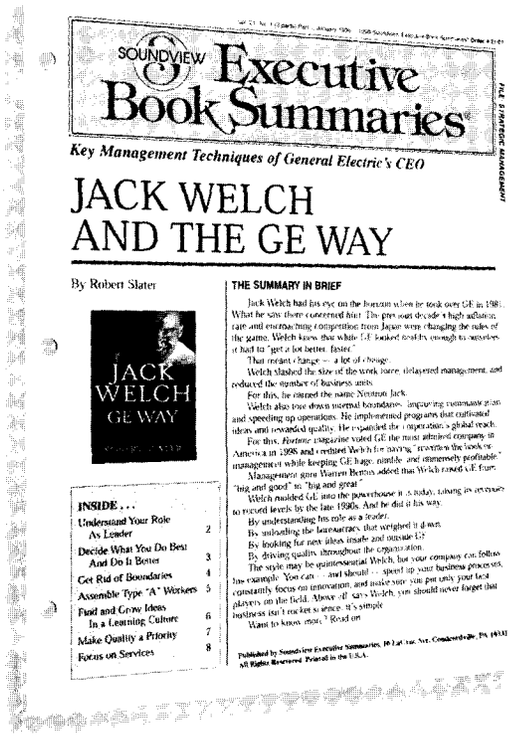
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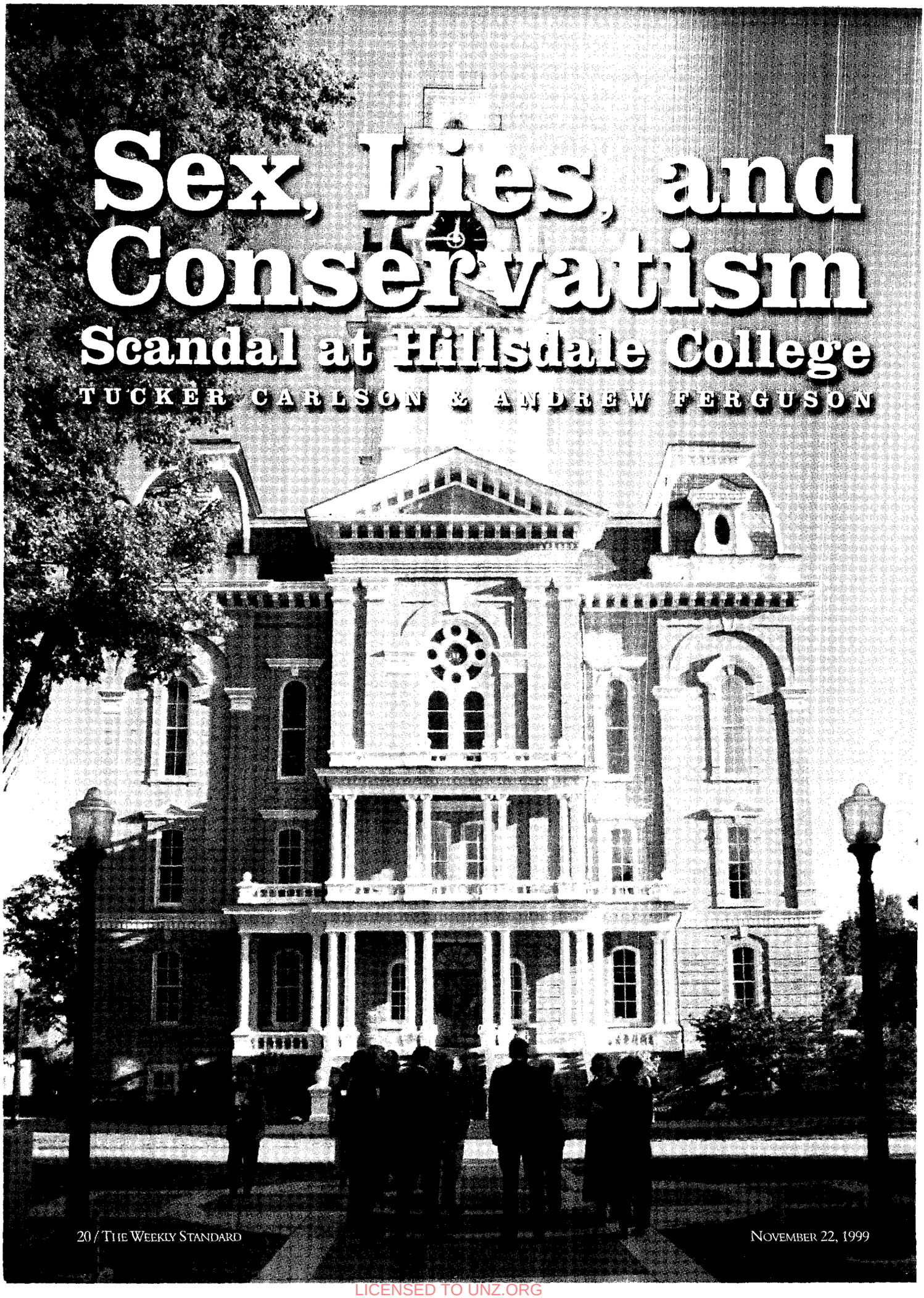
Sex, Lies, and Conservatism

Scandal at Hillsdale College

TUCKER CARLSON & ANDREW FERGUSON



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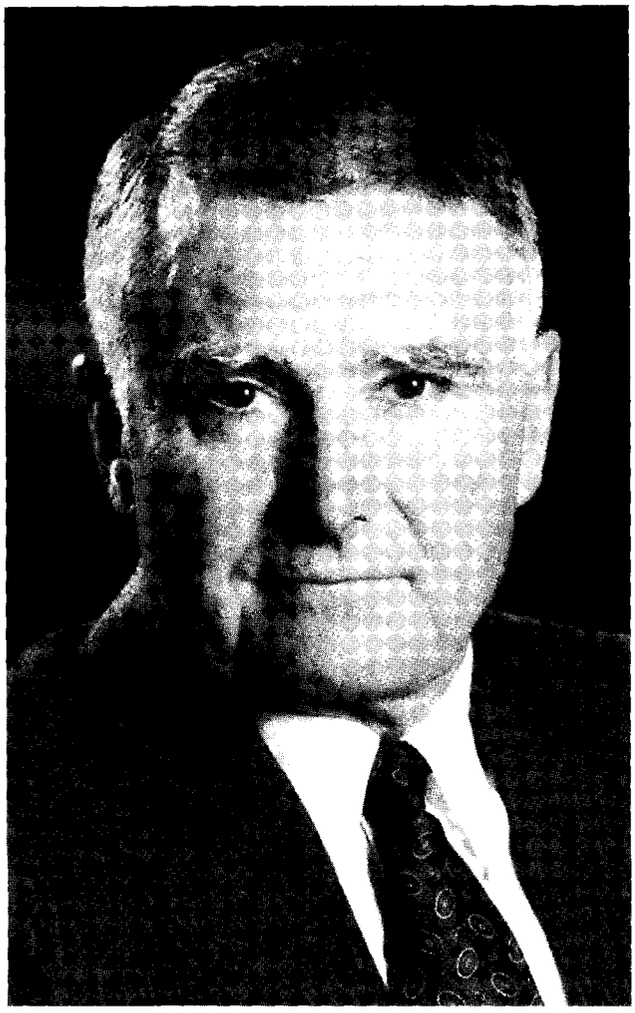

George Roche III, the disgraced ex-president of Hillsdale College; opposite page: the college's Central Hall

Around lunchtime on October 17, George Roche IV returned from an errand to find that his wife of 21 years, Lissa, had shot herself to death behind their home on the campus of Hillsdale College. Both Roches had attended Hillsdale, a small liberal-arts college 100 miles west of Detroit, and both worked there, he as a physical trainer in the athletic department, she as an editor at various Hillsdale publications. Their son was a junior at Hillsdale. George's father, George Roche III, was Hillsdale's longtime president. But there was no memorial service for Lissa Roche on the Hillsdale campus. After a private ceremony, her body was cremated. Within days, word spread that President Roche had been having an affair with his daughter-in-law.

Plausible rumors about Roche's womanizing had circulated for years at Hillsdale, but this one stuck. Colleagues remembered that the two traveled together frequently. Others recalled that at a recent wedding reception for Roche and his second wife (he had divorced his first wife in April after 44 years of marriage), Lissa Roche got drunk and made a number of bitter and cryptic remarks about the college president. Then, while being questioned by the police, Roche admitted that his daughter-in-law had visited him hours before she died and had threatened to commit suicide. Most damning of all, Roche's son, George IV (known as "I.V."), told a number of professors and administrators at Hillsdale that he believed his father had been sleeping with his wife.

It turns out he had reason to believe it. According to I.V. Roche, in an account he gave to John J. Miller of *National Review*, he and Lissa went to the hospital to visit President Roche (who was being treated there for diabetes) on the morning of the suicide. While at the hospital, Lissa confessed that she and President Roche had been having a sexual relationship since 1980. Stunned, I.V. asked his father if it was true. Roche, I.V. told Miller, "didn't say a word. I could tell by looking at him that she was telling the truth. I saw the look in his eyes. He was caught."

Two weeks after Lissa Roche's suicide, the board placed George Roche "on leave." Roche, who was on his honeymoon in Hawaii, returned to Hillsdale. Last Wednesday, the college announced that George Roche would be leaving his job after 28 years as president of Hillsdale. Within hours Roche's office was dark, its contents in boxes. Roche said he planned to leave Hillsdale by the end of the week. He didn't say where he was going.

Hillsdale College is perhaps the premier conservative college in the country—though "conservative colleges" isn't really the most competitive category one can imagine. Which is, of course, the point: With higher learning in America increasingly in thrall to multiculturalism and the other enthusiasms of leftist orthodoxy, Hillsdale promotes itself as self-consciously traditional—"a trustee," as its mission statement proclaims, "of modern man's intellectual and spiritual inheritance from the Judeo-Christian faith and Greco-Roman culture, a heritage finding its clearest expression in the American experiment of self-government under law."

Hillsdale was founded by progressive Baptists in 1844, and from the beginning admitted students regardless of sex or race. Women were enrolled on a par with men, freed slaves with whites. Over the following century it dropped its sectarian affiliation and by the late 1960s had fallen on hard times—nearly bankrupt, its endowment down to $4 million, faculty hiring at a standstill, and the buildings in disastrous repair. In desperation the board of trustees

Tucker Carlson is a staff writer and Andrew Ferguson a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Don Simmons/THE BLADE, Toledo, Ohio

The gazebo in the Hillsdale College arboretum, where Lissa Roche was found dead on October 17

launched a search for a new president, and in 1971 settled on George Roche.

Roche was 35, director of seminars for a libertarian think tank in New York called the Foundation for Economic Education, and a former history professor at the Colorado School of Mines. It quickly became apparent that his great gift, like that of all successful college presidents, was in generating publicity and raising funds. By the time of his hiring, the American conservative movement was entering its early adulthood, and Roche allied the school with it in an ingenious way. In so doing he made of himself a hero to the movement, and transformed his school, in the unironic words of a former student, into a "conservative academic paradise."

In the mid-1970s, there were still several American colleges, Hillsdale among them, that refused to accept federal funding. They did so for a variety of reasons and with generally baleful effects. At Hillsdale the reasons were ideological—a determination to resist the overweening power of the state. Even so, many Hillsdale students received federal student aid. According to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, this made the school itself subject to federal mandates. When HEW began peppering the college for data about the student body's racial, ethnic, and sexual make-up, Roche and Hillsdale resisted.

It was Roche's insight that this resistance could be turned into a public relations asset, particularly attractive to the growing base of donors to conservative causes. The survival of Hillsdale became a conservative crusade, the college a right-wing David standing up to the federal Goliath.

"The other schools that didn't take federal money, they didn't tout it," says Robert Russell, a longtime fund-raising consultant to Hillsdale. "George's idea was that not taking the money ought to be a cause. It ought to stand on its own as an appeal. And it attracted a lot of attention, a lot of students, a lot of donors."

After the Supreme Court's 1984 *Grove City* decision, which generally upheld the government's position regarding student aid, Hillsdale barred its students from receiving any federal aid at all. In place of federal assistance, the school substituted its own, privately raised money. Today more than 80 percent of the students receive financial aid—but from Hillsdale, not the feds. For conservatives, this has made the Hillsdale cause all the more compelling.

Roche developed several venues for broadcasting Hillsdale's message of "academic independence" and "freedom from government control." The vehicle for much of the fund-raising was *Imprimis*, a monthly newsletter mailed free to conservatives around the country. Of all conservative publications, it is the most widely circulated, with a subscription base of more than 900,000. Hillsdale

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painstakingly assembled this list of subscribers over 26 years and guards it jealously, declining to rent it to other conservative nonprofits that would like to raid it for donors.

Each issue of *Imprimis* comes with a plea for funds and, crucially, a return envelope. A large portion of the college's donations, according to fund-raisers, arrive this way. For content, *Imprimis* offers a brief essay from a conservative stalwart, usually based on talks given at one of the many seminars Hillsdale hosts, both on campus and off. Three times a year, Hillsdale takes its show on the road, in seminars produced under the auspices of its subsidiary, another Roche creation called the Shavano Institute. *Imprimis* invites its regional subscribers to attend the seminars, and audiences often approach 1,000, to hear such speakers as William F. Buckley, Colin Powell, Jack Kemp, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Margaret Thatcher—every star in the conservative constellation has at one time or another appeared at a Shavano seminar. The next one, in January, will feature Bill Bennett; next May, Ken Starr will appear at a Shavano event in Dallas.

Speakers like this don't come cheap. "George had the vision to see that to raise money, you've got to spend money," says Ron Trowbridge, Hillsdale's vice president and its director of external affairs. Through *Imprimis* and Shavano, Trowbridge says, "George knew you could build up a reputation, you could get students, and you could raise money."

The success of this fund-raising apparatus is astounding. Between 1971, when he became Hillsdale president, and the end of October 1999, Roche raised almost $325 million dollars. The figure comes from Trowbridge, who adds, "If you wanted to adjust for inflation, the amount becomes almost astronomical." Today Hillsdale's endowment stands at $183 million. Roche's success is evident on campus, where the physical plant has been expanded by 50 percent, while the student body has been kept constant at 1,200. The student-faculty ratio is 11 to 1; the SAT scores of incoming freshmen have steadily increased, and so, by most accounts, has the quality of the faculty. Last year, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Hillsdale number one among midwestern liberal-arts colleges.

"It's an American story," says Russell, the fund-raising consultant, "a David and Goliath story, a magical story."

But in the wake of a scandal as lurid as the one now roiling Hillsdale, magic becomes harder to sustain. Last Thursday, Hillsdale held a "special convocation" designed to "clarify the college's core values." Students and faculty (the latter in a full, robed academic procession led by a lone bagpiper dressed in a kilt) filed into the George Roche Health Education and Sports Complex and took their places in folding chairs on the basketball court. A string quartet played chamber music. The college choir sang hymns. After an opening prayer, the chairman of the board of trustees, Donald Mossey, class of '51, addressed the school. "This is an important time for Hillsdale," Mossey began, a time when "history is being made." Indeed, Mossey explained, it is at this time in history that "we can pledge ourselves to defend Hillsdale College. And we can do it with God's blessing."

Subsequent speakers agreed. "Transitions can be frightening times," observed dean of the faculty James Stephens, before explaining why Hillsdale is such a terrific place. Being at Hillsdale, enthused senior class president Beau Verlin, "is almost like going to school in the '50s. And you know what? There's no place I'd rather be." Verlin went on to congratulate Hillsdale on its fight "against moral relativism," and then read an extended passage from Martin Luther King's *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*.

It was inspiring. And totally confusing. Apart from a few references to "events of the last few weeks," no one mentioned the reason for the convocation. If you'd arrived on campus from Mars—or even from Washington—and had somehow missed the local news and the front pages of the region's major newspapers, you would have had no idea that the president of Hillsdale had just been forced from office in the wake of a suicide-sex scandal. Inside the Roche Sports Complex all was weirdly calm. Mossey referred to the abrupt and spectacular destruction of Roche's reputation and career as "Dr. Roche's request for an early retirement." Acting president Robert Blackstock—the new leader of Hillsdale's war on moral relativism—all but dared those present to pass judgment on Roche's behavior. "We are all," Blackstock said, "*all* of us, left fallen and short of the glory of God."

And that was it. Nobody stood up and shouted, "But what about the daughter-in-law?" Nobody even snickered. The students simply sang a not-very-enthusiastic rendition of the alma mater ("Noble pride in our Hillsdale's name endures") and filed out.

Back in his campus office after the convocation, Trowbridge, Hillsdale's vice president, describes the assembly as the final step in a long process of "closure." Trowbridge is tall, white haired, and handsome in an aging leading man sort of way. (He can look and sound spookily like Lloyd Bridges in *Airplane!*) It is fortuitous that he happens to be the college's chief flack, for he is also Hillsdale's resident expert on what he calls "the Roche case."

"I know more about this than anyone," Trowbridge says, and he may. Trowbridge has worked at Hillsdale on and off since 1978. He is close to almost every member of

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the Roche family. For 13 years he worked with Lissa Roche, who had an office next door. Trowbridge says he knew Lissa Roche was having problems in her marriage (in September, "she ran away for one day to California, then came back") but had no idea she was seriously depressed. "I would never have thought in a million years that she would put a bullet into her head," he says. "That was really a surprise for me."

Shortly after Lissa Roche's death, Trowbridge began to hear rumors about the dead woman's personal life. On October 27, after conversations with her husband and friends, he took what he had learned to the board of trustees, which promptly suspended the president. Trowbridge says he learned a great deal in the course of investigating the Roche matter. But he is not going to talk about any of it. In fact, he won't even discuss why he won't discuss it. Trowbridge does say that Hillsdale reached some sort of legal agreement with the departing president, one that allows Roche to keep his (presumably generous) retirement benefits. But that's it. "The reason they did it will never come out. It will never be discussed. What we had to do was work out what was legally satisfactory to both sides. But I would still not tell you—ever—why it was."

Attorneys are telling Hillsdale administrators not to contradict Roche's last statement, in which the former president implied that he had retired simply because he had gotten too old.

Why not? Simple, says Trowbridge: the Constitution. "What people are wanting us to do," he explains, "is to deny George his constitutional right to privacy. You can get sued for that." The walls of his office are covered with photographs of conservative heroes, including Ronald Reagan and Warren Burger, both of whom he once worked for. Trowbridge has just finished explaining how, over the years, Hillsdale has been willing to stand up for conservative principles in the face of elite opposition, even Justice Department lawsuits. Now he's fixated on a constitutional "right to privacy," something most conservatives don't even believe exists. What's going on? Well, Trowbridge says, "that's what the attorneys are telling us."

Apparently, the attorneys are also telling Hillsdale administrators not to contradict Roche's last public statement, in which the former president implied that he had decided to retire simply because he had gotten too old ("nearly 65 years of age") to run a college. In light of the problems Roche has caused for Hillsdale lately, this kind of make-believe comes off as stunning. But the school seems determined to play along. "That's the truth as he understands it," Trowbridge says, sounding a bit like an Eastern mystic. "I think it's what he wants to say, and if that's what he wants to say, it's his business. I don't have any problem with it."

Trowbridge can say things like this because he still maintains that "no one will ever know" what really happened between President Roche and his daughter-in-law. But what about George Roche IV? Doesn't his account pretty much settle the matter? Why, after all, would he make up a story like that? Trowbridge doesn't answer the question directly, but he makes the point—ever so subtly—that there are a few things reporters from out of town might not know about Hillsdale. Take old I.V. Roche. Nice guy but, well, he may be a little odd. Or as Trowbridge puts it: "I think what he always wanted to do with his life was to go back to Colorado and live in the woods. He likes to be in the woods. He likes to camp. He likes to build fires outside." These days, Trowbridge says, you might see old I.V. on campus once in a while. "He kind of walks around maybe a little bit not focused." And, Trowbridge adds, he's on pills. The kind they give to depressed people. The kind—Trowbridge doesn't actually say this, but you get the point—that might make a man imagine that his father had been sleeping with his wife.

Trowbridge is a former professor of English and by all accounts a smart, decent person who is well-liked at Hillsdale. He doesn't seem like the kind of guy who would say the things he just did. Yet at some point every spinner begins to believe the spin. For Trowbridge, the point comes at the end of the conversation, when he suggests that, in fact, perhaps the Events of the Last Few Weeks really *didn't* have anything to do with Roche's leaving. Perhaps it was his medical problems that caused Roche to retire. You see, Trowbridge says, "George had really severe diabetes and it was really beginning to take its toll and you could see it. When he was giving speeches lately you could see long pauses. And the pauses, I'm told by a physician, were a diabetic situation. So it was a mutual agreement."

Maybe that's what Trowbridge will tell Hillsdale's donors and alumni when he writes them to explain why the college has a new president. Or maybe that's what readers of *Imprimis* will be told when they ask why Lissa Roche is no longer the managing editor. Trowbridge seems confident he'll be able to explain what has happened at Hillsdale in a way people can understand.

Of course some people won't even need an explanation. Among the many papers piled on Trowbridge's desk (interview requests from *Time* and *20/20*, page proofs from

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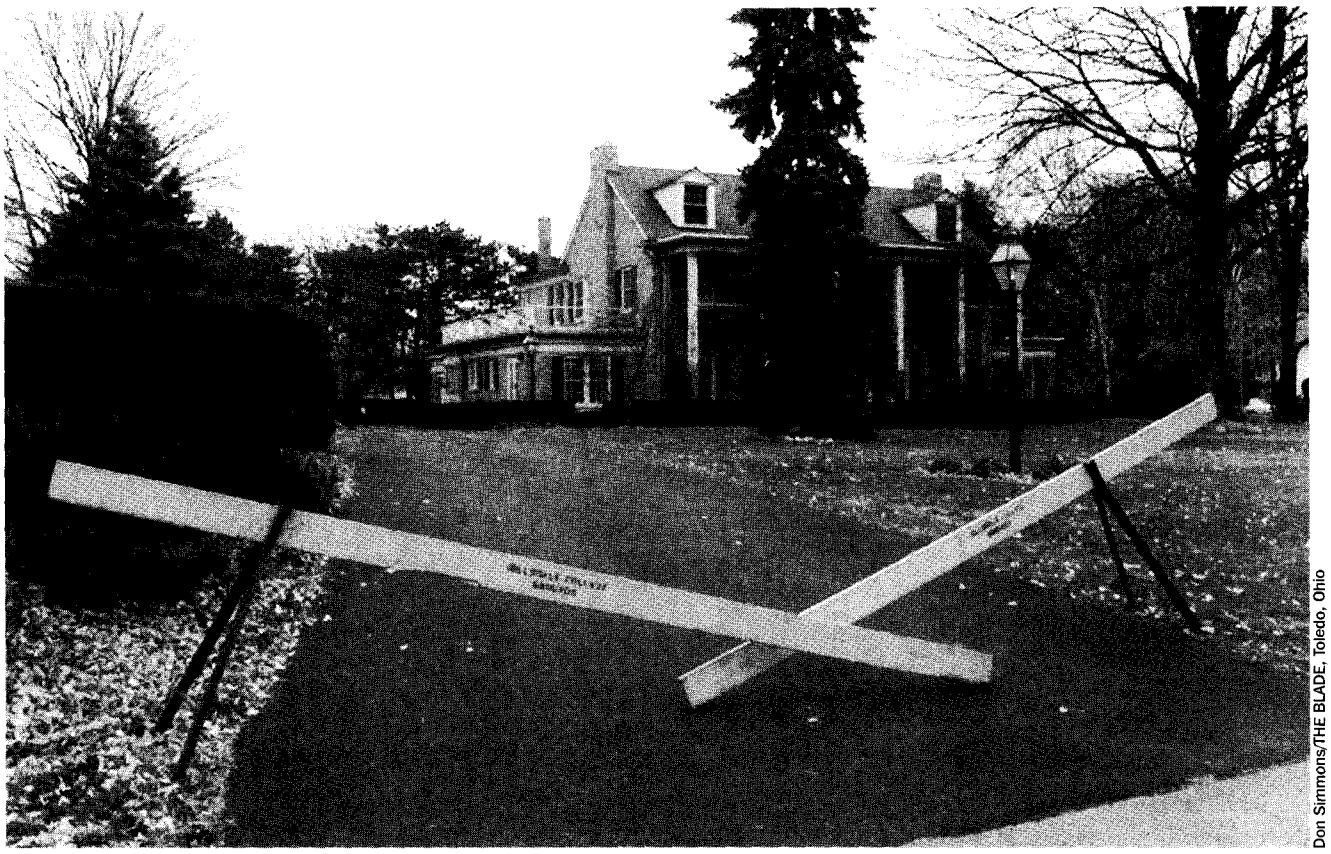

Don Simmons/THE BLADE, Toledo, Ohio

The presidential mansion, George Roche III's home from 1971 until last week

the new *Imprimis*) are phone messages from prominent conservatives who have called to offer their support. Trowbridge is sure there will be others. "Quayle will call us," he says. "Steve Forbes will help us."

And again, he may be right. The network of celebrity conservatives on which Hillsdale can now draw in its time of need is very large, thanks to Roche. Fit and handsome as a soap opera star, he became a conservative celebrity himself. "He has an extremely charismatic personality," says Lee Edwards, a historian of the conservative movement who sent one of his children to Hillsdale. "He's a very good speaker, a good writer. He's able to take complicated ideas and transmit them in an easily digestible way."

Roche is not only a creator but also a creature of the conservative counterculture. "The Long March through the Institutions" was a tactic, and a highly successful one, of the left only. Conservatives, by contrast, were content to create a parallel universe with its own magazines, publishing house, newspaper, television network—and of course, in Hillsdale, its own college—all of them untainted by the "dominant liberal culture." In this incestuous world Roche was a star. For four years in the Reagan administration he served as head of the National Council on Educational Research; then, as many conservatives did in those days, he quit with the recommendation that his agency be abolished. He wrote 14 books, several of them self-published. Others were put out by Regnery Publishing, reviewed in the *Washington Times*, and then boomed as "book of the year" by *Insight* magazine, a *Times* subsidiary. But the dominant culture was for the most part happy to ignore him.

That cloistered atmosphere carried over onto the Hillsdale campus, and it is no surprise that over the past 28 years many students and faculty have chafed at it. His fund-raising forced Roche to travel constantly—"He was like a ghostly figure," one student said last week—but he impressed his vision on the school absolutely. Several discontented members of the "Hillsdale family"—few of whom wish to be identified—use the phrase "cult of personality" to describe Hillsdale in the Roche era. Flip through back issues of the college yearbook, and it often seems that there is a George Roche photo on every page.

"George Roche was a cult leader masquerading as a college president," says Thomas Payne, who was an associate professor of political science at Hillsdale from 1977 to 1987. Discontented faculty members ventilated their frustration by telling the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in 1996 that Hillsdale resembled a "Gestapo police state." Another compared it to "a Stalinist kind of environment." Resentment of Roche's highhanded administrative style wasn't helped by his salary. *Chronicle* reported that Roche, as of 1994, was the fifth highest paid president of an American college, with a total compensation package of $448,000.

Even so, Roche inspired devotion among administrators, faculty, and students, some of whom actively protect-

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ed him. According to two current Hillsdale employees, evidence of Roche's ongoing extramarital affairs had been placed before members of the board of trustees and of the administration over the past 10 years. "It was always dismissed as rumor, even by people who knew it to be true," said one. "It was just too horrible to act on."

Seen in this context, the convocation held last Thursday might be considered a "modified limited hangout." Two days before, a number of student leaders—editors of the paper, heads of various campus organizations—were summoned to a meeting with Hillsdale's chaplain and two of the college's deans. The purpose of the gathering was to talk about current events at Hillsdale. "There will be no discussion of President Roche," the group was informed moments after sitting down.

This is the sort of thing that on an ordinary campus would spark a sit-in, maybe an effigy burning. At Hillsdale, it provoked only tepid complaints, even from the local guardians of free speech.

A few hours after the convocation, half a dozen or so students sit in the offices of the *Collegian*, Hillsdale's newspaper, talking about the Roche Affair. All have just returned from class. None has yet received a straight answer from the college about Roche. "I haven't gotten explanations," says Teresa Masterson, a junior who writes for the paper. "I've gotten pep talks." Me too, nod the others. The words hang in the air. Masterson pipes up again, this time sounding apologetic. "They don't *have* to tell us. We don't have a right to know. We already know what we need to know." Again, the others nod. More details, Masterson says, would just be fodder for "human curiosity." The way she says it, "human curiosity" sounds about as appealing as "human waste."

"We want to project openness," Trowbridge said, shortly after news of the scandal became public. Then a memo went out to college employees instructing them not to talk to the press, and soon after, Trowbridge announced that officials would never again entertain discussion of the matter. Will members of the extended Hillsdale family—particularly the donors and alumni upon whom it depends for funding—rest content with a similar lack of curiosity? If so, Hillsdale risks being mocked by Roche's own words from his resignation statement. "Together we have built a beautiful dream," he wrote. "We have proved that integrity, values, and courage can still triumph in a corrupt world." ♦

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Senator Mitch McConnell, questioning I. Michael Heyman, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, at a hearing on the Smithsonian's budget:

"I am confident that you are familiar with an article from the June 7 edition of THE WEEKLY STANDARD entitled 'The National Museum of Multiculturalism.' [After reading it] I spent the better part of a morning walking around the museum myself. . . . I want you to know that the article did generate a good deal of discussion among a number of Senators."

—*Transcript of Senate Rules Committee Hearing, July 28, 1999*

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Germany as a Great Power

Ten years after the fall of the Wall, a united Germany's capital is once again Berlin. What does this portend?

By Christopher Caldwell

Hamburg, Germany

German chancellor Gerhard Schröder's speeches have always been like rock concerts. During last year's campaign they often *were* rock concerts. A half-hour of Schröder boilerplate—about how "fresh wind" from "the New Middle" would carry "the New Germany" into "the upswing"—would be sandwiched into a sunny Saturday afternoon of blues guitarists and danceable rock combos. In contrast to the similarly centrist Clinton and Blair campaigns, the Schröder campaign was keen to *hype* its man's origins in the 1960s counterculture. It was easy to get your hands on 20-year-old photos of Schröder marching at No-Nukes rallies in torn blue-jeans, a bra-less babe on each arm—his campaign would give them to you! They'd also tell you about his boozing, his love of Cuban cigars, his four wives. Particularly his fourth—Doris Köpf, the kittenish tabloid reporter half Schröder's age who'd spent her own divorced years hanging around the art world in lower Manhattan. The biographical info was meant to contrast Schröder's "youth" with the fogyish, trapped-in-the-Cold-War leadership of Schröder's predecessor, Helmut Kohl.

But by this past October, just a year later, when the Social Democrats held their Hamburg Party Day in a bleak suburban auditorium during a downpour, Schröder was looking his age—which is three years older than Kohl was when Kohl took power in 1982. Schröder has taken on the lumpy, dumpy, harried look that seems to come with the chancellor's job—less sex-symbol than sexagenarian. He's losing his hair, and at the Hamburg gathering he had a cold. If he was impressive as he harangued a standoffish crowd of a couple thousand party regulars, it was in that way hungover Germans describe as *bleich aber gefaßt*—ashen but composed.

The only hint of rock 'n' roll came on the T-shirts worn by a dozen representatives of the Young Socialists (Jusos), the nationwide organization of militants-in-training. Schröder had been Juso president 20 years ago, when, as a budding William Kunstler, he represented a Red Army Faction collaborator in court and carried "*Ammis 'raus!*" [Americans out!] placards at anti-missile rallies. The Jusos, the short-haired 1999 version, huddled around snickering and hissing and rolling their eyes. On the back of the T-shirts, under the heading "The Gerhard Schröder/Tony Blair Oh-Yes-We-Understood-You-Perfectly Tour 1999," was a list of what looked like concert venues, starting with "June 13—Saarland." It then continued with a list of dates and places: Brandenburg, Thuringia, North Rhine/Westphalia, Saxony. . . . These are the regional elections the SPD has lost since the early summer. The party hasn't won any. The SPD has also lost its majority in the Bundesrat, Germany's upper house. As Schröder sat impassively at the head table, his fellow socialists strode past him one by one to expatiate on his failures, like doctors diagnosing a backsliding patient, or farmers discussing a beast of burden. And when the mayor of Hamburg rose to say, "Gerhard Schröder is the best horse we have in the barn," the audience began to boo *him*, too.

Foreign minister Joschka Fischer, who leads the junior partner in Schröder's governing coalition, the Greens, explains the chancellor's position as "comparable to Bill Clinton's in the first half of his first term." It's not. Clinton may have infuriated the country by starting his administration with gays in the military, national health, and Lani Guinier, but his stabs at ruling from the left bought him a lot of credibility with Democratic hard-liners, who have stuck with him for the duration of his presidency. Schröder has failed to follow any one plan long enough to win himself any credibility anywhere.

He campaigned in 1998 as a pro-business centrist,

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touting as his economics minister the computer entrepreneur Jost Stollman, who had called Germany's welfare system "a prison for the average wage earner." Once elected, Schröder ditched Stollman's ideas (and Stollman himself) for the policies of his party chief and finance minister, Oskar Lafontaine, a hard-line Social Democrat who pushed through a demand-side tax reform.

But when Germany showed negative growth and rising unemployment during Schröder's first quarter in office, Schröder pushed Lafontaine out. He used his new finance minister, Hans Eichel, to hold the line on spending and press a 30.5-billion DM ($20 billion) "savings package." Puny though it is, it's stalled in both houses. Even if it's enacted, it won't take effect until 2001. Now, in the wake of his electoral catastrophes, Schröder looks ready to hang Eichel out to dry.

The Hamburg gathering took place the day before Berlin's municipal elections, on October 10. Schröder's party was expected to get clobbered again—and did, losing to the Christian Democrats and nearly falling to third place behind the newly revived party of Democratic Socialism (the former East German Communist party). The beatings will stop for the next six months, with no big regional elections scheduled until Schleswig-Holstein and (once again) North Rhine/Westphalia next spring. Schleswig-Holstein is still solid SPD territory, but the CDU's ex-defense minister, Volker Ruhe, is given a good chance of winning. North Rhine/Westphalia—home, with its gigantic cities of Dortmund and Cologne, to almost a quarter of the German population—was the SPD's very backbone until Schröder lost there last summer. Opinion is hardening that if he loses there again, he will have to resign.

Schröder is raising worries that the "Berlin Republic" will be significantly different from the "Bonn Republic."

For all his clownish leftism, no one expected Schröder to fail quite this badly. In fact, Bill Clinton and Tony Blair's recipe of protecting a welfare state while trimming its worst excesses should have worked better in Germany than anywhere else. Germany—with its government-sponsored wage agreements reaching $40 an hour and its cradle-to-grave health and social programs—had more room to cut without causing voters to suffer in any serious way. Instead, when Schröder and Blair released a joint policy statement last summer, largely a collection of bromides on privatization and civic morality, old-line German socialists were horrified. And when the aide who'd set the paper up—Bodo Hombach, guru of the German "Third Way"—came under investigation for laundering money through Canadian real estate, the project was wholly discredited.

What's more, it should have been both easy and popular to attack some of the more obviously stifling trappings of the old economy—like laws forcing stores to close at sundown (making shopping after work impossible), or the ban on advertising money-back guarantees. But the only deregulation that has occurred either came during the Kohl administration (finally allowing companies to compensate their executives with stock options, for example) or has been forced on Germany by European integration (like energy deregulation, which has cut electricity bills by up to 70 percent over the last decade).

On top of that, Germany's longstanding middle-of-the-road consensus should have made the center at least as unassailable a governing perch as it has proved for Tony Blair in Britain. Anti-fascism is almost a state religion in the western states, and one would have thought anti-communism a hard-learned conviction in the eastern ones. Instead, the parties are breaking apart, and communism is reassembling its followers in the east. The election of the first chancellor with no personal memory of World War II, along with the transfer of the country's capital from Bonn back to Berlin earlier this year, was supposed to signal Germany's reentry into Europe as "a normal country." Instead, Schröder is raising worries that the "Berlin Republic" will be significantly different from the "Bonn Republic" that had scored such successes in putting other western countries at ease.

Not that the Berlin Republic doesn't have certain new strengths. It is the biggest winner in European unification. The port of Hamburg, reconnected to eastern Europe via the Elbe, is booming. Munich has led explosive growth in Bavaria, which under a low-tax state government has become Germany's California, its high-tech and banking capital. Bavaria's 5 percent jobless rate is a clear sign that business-friendly tax policies can buy immunity from the German curse of structural unemployment (still well into double digits nationally). Bonn, the Cold War capital, despite the departure of all Germany's government ministries except defense, has seen home prices *rise* and unemployment rates fall to Bavarian—or American—levels.

But although the government has pumped a trillion marks worth of aid into the former East Germany since the wall came down, all the cities in the eastern part of the country are shrinking, economically and demographically. That includes Berlin—although everyone, investors and residents alike, expects the city to prosper once its infra-

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AP/Wide World Photos

German chancellor Gerhard Schröder (left) with his predecessor Helmut Kohl

structure gets built. But that's a big part of the problem. On the gentrifying streets of Berlin's Prenzlauer Berg, speculative sushi bars and art galleries and Italian sunglasses boutiques line blocks that are still inhabited by men with rotten teeth and 1970s Soviet Bloc zipper jackets. They're not dumb. They know their neighborhood—no, their society—is being reconfigured to exclude them. Some eastern Germans openly express a preference for the old regime. The young filmmaker Leander Haußmann's *Sonnenallee*—a coming-of-age comedy about 1970s East Berlin that resembles a *Happy Days* in which the secret police replaces the Fonz—has been playing in the east to theaters packed with laughing nostalgics.

This nostalgia is beginning to take a more overtly political form. The former Communists—once the Socialist Unity party, now the party of Democratic Socialism or PDS—still get only 1 percent of the vote in the old Bundesrepublik. But the PDS is becoming the second party in much of the east, where it routinely gets upwards of 20 percent—as much as 35 percent in East Berlin. Its popularity, in tandem with the ruling coalition's recent collapse in the new states, has led some left-wing SPD members—including Lafontaine—to urge welcoming the PDS into a new coalition defending the welfare state. The PDS is becoming chic for populist intellectuals and eastern yuppies who inhabit such middle-middle-class suburbs as Hellersdorf-Marzahn. But it also draws from losers and revanchists, and with no district in Berlin under 13 percent unemployment, there are a lot of those to draw from.

And that is not the only thing leaching votes from the major parties: There are also a number of right-wing parties. It's important not to overstate the actual political strength of Germany's hard right, which is nil. But that's partly because it is split in three parts, each too fractious to break the 5 percent minimum for taking seats in the Bundestag. United behind one leader, the right could reach into high single digits, roughly the level the PDS hovered at just five years ago. And these are not global-economy skeptics, à la Pat Buchanan or Switzerland's Christoph Blocher, who merely have some odd affiliations and odder enthusiasms. These are real fascist parties. The newest and most dynamic of the right-wing factions, the German People's Union (DVU), is a collection of historical revisionists who have sizable delegations in two state parliaments—Saxony Anhalt and Brandenburg (the region that makes up the Berlin suburbs).

The DVU is the personal creation of Gerhard Frey, a Munich-based direct mail and publishing mogul. The movement's newspaper, the *National-Zeitung*, comes with (a) a blow-in card that's a bank-transfer form for making a tax-free contribution to the DVU; (b) headlines that incite anti-immigrant paranoia ("Gypsy Influx Without End?"); and (c) page after page of allegations that everything we think we know about German atrocities during World War II is diametrically wrong. One article traces "English air-war plans from the time of the Weimar Republic." Another alleges that the German massacres at Oradour in France were undertaken for good reason. ("Oradour: How It *Really* Was: Covered-up Crimes of the Maquisards.") There's even an ad for Dr. Klaus Sojka's "Photos that Lie: Photoswindle against Germany" (with an introduction by David Irving). Germany is not in the worst shape it's been vis-à-vis the postwar right. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the fascist National party was sitting in the legislatures of 9 of 11 states. Today, the fragmented extremists hold only their handful of local seats.

Nonetheless, Germany's recent immunity to political extremism appears to be breaking down. That became clear during last summer's big intellectual controversy, over a speech that the (hitherto) leftist philosopher Peter Sloterdijk gave at a Heidegger symposium at Elmau castle in June.

You may never have heard of Sloterdijk, but in a country that still accords celebrity status to public philosophers, he is one of the best-known. His speech, which

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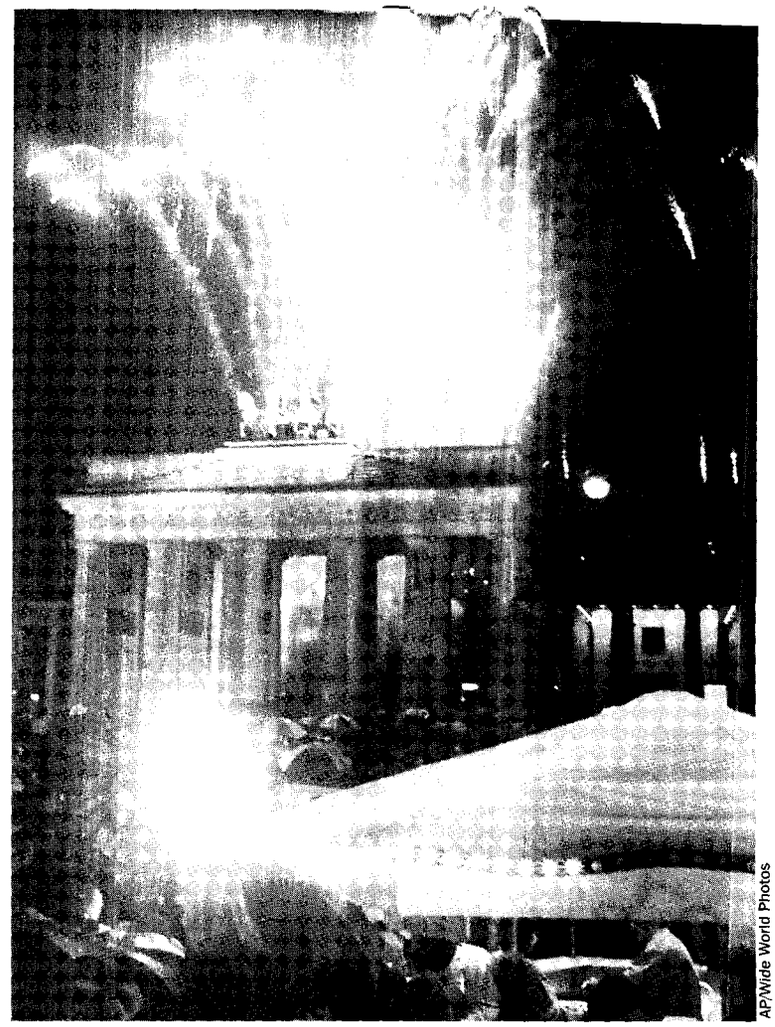
leaked out only piecemeal until he published it in September, concerned an opaque passage in the "Letter on Humanism," where Heidegger refers to humans as the "shepherds of *Sein*" (Being). Sloterdijk took this, in the context of biotechnology, to mean that people would soon become the actual authors of life. They would have to take responsibility for the people they meant to create in test tubes, since that kind of reproduction was the wave of the future, and decide which human types they wanted to save and which to kill off. When Jürgen Habermas, for years a kind of philosophical guru of Germany's soft-left consensus, attacked Sloterdijk in *Die Zeit* for running dangerously close to Nazi eugenics, Sloterdijk simply upped the ante. He belittled Habermas as one of "the traumatized children of the postwar," and bade such traumas goodbye. In an open letter to Habermas, he wrote: "The era of overly normal sons of National Socialist fathers is coming, naturally, to a close." The *Frankfürter Allgemeine Zeitung* worried that the Sloterdijk debate might represent the "metaphysical founding of the Berlin Republic."



AP/Wide World Photos

The 10th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, at the Brandenburg Gate.

This gloomy development may help Schröder to focus the attention of his voters, however cynically, on a centrist program. At the Hamburg Party Day, Schröder took a page out of Bill Clinton's playbook, screaming at the top of his lungs to paint the CDU as extremists who would squander all the money he had earmarked for Germany's needy. "That party will ensure that no money will be left for children!" he sputtered, "and we cannot let them do it!" Still, it's unlikely his stoking fears of the right will alter the loyalties of many right-wing voters. In neighboring Austria in August, the socialist premier Viktor Klima, facing a tight race against Jörg Haider's hard-right Austrian Freedom party, set up a Clinton-style "war room" that focused on getting out a "Stop Haider" message. The result was a stunning second-place finish for Haider, the largest tally for a right-wing party in Austria since the Second World War.

There are a lot of signs that Germans want to shuck off their anguished relationship to the past—especially their need to hang their heads in the company of other nations. Whether it's due to a spike in good taste or to a lack of curiosity about what other countries are thinking, the percentage of those watching American TV series has gone down precipitously. (Particularly since the days when Helmut Kohl used to alter his speaking schedule to make sure he could catch *Dallas*.) Such solipsism goes beyond anti-Americanism; even the Franco-German relationship is passing through a period of neglect, after having been jealously fostered by Helmut Schmidt and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, then Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand. The resolutely monoglot Schröder is said to get along quite badly with French premier Lionel Jospin. Then there's the matter of the Holocaust memorial planned for the very center of Berlin, a project of the greatest importance to Kohl, which Schröder opposed. It's not that Schröder's opposition was full-throated. Nor did he put up much of a fuss when the project passed the Bundestag last summer. It's just that he made it amply clear that he thinks the "working off of the past," as Germans call it, is for all intents accomplished.

One might have expected that the ruling classes of Germany would have been wary of moving the capital from Bonn, and that the nationalist rabble would have pushed it. And yet the opposite was the case: There was a saying in Bonn during the narrow 338-320 vote over moving the capital: *Je Bonner, desto dummer*. (The more you like Bonn, the stupider you are.) The move to Berlin was championed most eagerly by the leadership class. Schröder is typical of that class, in both his leadership style and his reading of German history.

Just because Schröder doesn't remember the war

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doesn't mean he was untouched by it. His father was killed fighting for the Wehrmacht in Romania days after he was born. On the one hand, we can grant that he knows what he's talking about when he says, as he did during the campaign, "We must never return to German nationalism, for it leads only to desolation, destruction, and death." On the other hand, a Kohl-generation German would not have said, as Schröder did for a trade union publication last summer, that Germany should take its place as a "great power" (*Großmacht*) in Europe.

Seen from one angle, the chancellor's statement is less a hegemonic claim than a statement of fact. You don't have to believe in a *Sonderweg* (or "special path") for Germany to realize that, especially with its capital in Berlin, the country has something of a *Sonderlage* (or "special situation"). Germany borders on nine countries, more than any other European nation. The growing economies of central Europe seem destined to draw much of their investment capital from, and invest in the stock markets of, either Berlin or Moscow. And right now, that's simply no contest. The deutsche mark is an alternative currency in all of the Eastern European states, and is the actual currency in much of the Balkans, too. It's even an *official* currency of Montenegro. Germany seems destined to dominate east-central Europe much as America does the world: benignly, and by sheer market penetration.

There is no sign of anything like an appreciation of the Holocaust's uniqueness returning to German public speech.

But Schröder's great-power rhetoric struck many Germans as boorish, particularly since there's an impatience in certain quarters to reclaim European power status *right now*. That tendency came to the fore during the Kosovo conflict, which was more marked by dangerous sanctimony in Germany than it was elsewhere. Sources familiar with the thinking of the last two chancellors are absolutely unequivocal on the matter: Neither Helmut Schmidt nor Helmut Kohl would have backed the American-led war over Kosovo. But Schröder, Fischer, and defense minister Rudolf Scharping joined the battle with gusto. "At last, Germany has gone into battle on the side of right!" shouted Schröder at Hamburg Party Day—forgetting that Germany has always *thought* it was going into battle on the side of right.

In discussions of Kosovo, the line between ordinary (albeit tragic) human rights abuses and the humanity-altering enormity of the Holocaust was trampled over by German politicians until it disappeared. Indeed, so zealously have German politicians invoked the parallel that it sometimes seems, for Germans at least, as if fostering historical amnesia was the whole *point* of the Kosovo operation. Foreign minister Fischer explained his departure from a lifelong pacifism by saying, "I've learned not only to say 'No more wars,' but also 'No more Auschwitz.'" And, "The bombs are necessary to stop the 'Serbian SS.'" Defense minister Scharping added that Serbia is "a look into the ugly face of the German past, of mass murder, selection, and concentration camps." German politicians still speak constantly about Kosovo. It remains a live issue. There is no sign of anything like an appreciation of the Holocaust's uniqueness returning to German public speech.

There is a second tendency that has come out of Kosovo, besides this erosion of historical accountability: an erosion of the sense of exactly *why* America remains in Europe. German politicians complain obsessively that the United States was never "engaged" in Kosovo, that it followed its habitual cycle of ignore-ignore-ignore-destroy. While the United States can be persuaded to *bomb* Europe, it cannot be persuaded to care about it, let alone listen to its wishes. The divergence between the United States and *all* European countries over the future shape of the Balkans only narrowly missed a public airing in early November, when Washington decided not to dissent publicly from a European decision to send heating aid to Serbian civilians this winter.

Foreign minister Fischer, once among Germany's most anti-American politicians, says, "Europe must work in tandem with the United States." That accords with Madeleine Albright's insistence that any independent European force avoid the "three Ds": no decoupling (i.e., creating a military force independent of NATO); no duplication (i.e., building NATO-style weapons that would allow Europe to dispense with NATO); and no discrimination (i.e., according European Union NATO members greater protection than non-EU NATO members). But it does not accord with what German defense thinkers are saying. Many urge turning the Western European Union, heretofore a tiny consulting body for defense issues, into a real military alliance. The EU has put former NATO secretary general Javier Solana in charge of formulating a common defense policy.

Scharping's number-one preoccupation at present is purely a matter of duplication: getting Europe's defense ministers to agree on a standard transport plane, probably the Airbus A400M. The continent is now abjectly dependent on U.S. C-17 and Hercules C-130 cargo planes for transporting matériel. Even as resolute an Atlanticist as former president Richard von Weizsäcker recently gave an

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interview to *Die Zeit* in which he urged creation of a Europe-only Rapid Reaction Force. "Complete dependence on American decision-making is just something we can no longer afford," he said, particularly in light of Kosovo and the "irresponsible, brutal unilateralism" demonstrated by the Senate's rejection of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. As for decoupling: "Europe needs the United States as a pacifier," says a high-ranking German military officer who demands anonymity. "If you want to avoid decoupling, you need to stay here." That sounds cooperative. But it means: *The ball's in your court*. The impression it leaves is that Europeans are looking for a pretext for a modest decoupling without the appearance of continental unilateralism.

Again: Europeans, not Germans. One must stress that Germany's Social Democrats and Greens are not making any nationalistic military noises, only European ones. Nor is Germany unique in bristling at how little say Europe had in the prosecution of a war on its own soil. The French, as evidenced by Jacques Chirac's November condemnation of a "unipolar" (American) defense order, are much further along in their wishes for a European military that, if not fully independent of the United States, can at least *act* independently. Other countries are beginning to question the measly arms procurement and the downsized armies that have left Europe beholden to a far-away country that doesn't (they feel) understand Europe's interests. That, in turn, has led to increasing complaints, all over Europe, that the Pentagon won't share its know-how and won't open up its own defense procurement to foreign contractors.

Germany's Social Democrats and Greens are not making any nationalistic military noises, only European ones.

The difference is that in the Kohl era, Germany would have *dissented* from any European plans to punch out breathing room from the United States. Germany under Schröder is ready to share a typically European (or typically French) dissatisfaction with the Atlantic alliance—another sign that it feels it has lifted the historical weight of World War II to its own satisfaction.

Fischer's own Green party may turn out to be the biggest German casualty of Kosovo. Ever since they sent German youth into the streets in their tens of thousands to protest the stationing of American missiles on German soil in the early 1980s, the Greens have stood as much for peace as for the environment. Now that Fischer has shown himself to be one of the more bellicose members of the German government, a long-standing intra-party feud between Fischer's pragmatic "*Realos*" and the more utopian "*Spontis*," led by environment minister Jürgen Trittin, is breaking into the open. Trittin's people complain that Fischer's *Realos* will do anything—absolutely anything—to stay in the ruling coalition: You could suggest dropping nuclear waste on Biafran villages, one Green remarked, and they'd say, "How much do you need?"

By the time Schröder got the as-bad-as-expected news from Berlin voters, the knives were out for him in his party. His newest mortal enemy, Lafontaine, had just published a long-awaited memoir (*The Heart Beats Left*), which had gossipy detail on Lafontaine's falling out with the chancellor. The book's huge popularity made clear that it is Lafontaine's welfare-statist ideas, not Schröder's Third Way, that command a majority in the SPD. So Schröder's faction met Lafontaine's book as an act of treason.

But the chancellor's rivals were multiplying. Among them, yuppie defense minister Rudolf Scharping had the most lean and hungry look. And he had a long memory. Bested by Schröder in a battle to dominate the Jusos in the 1970s, and bested by Lafontaine in a battle to run the party in 1995, Scharping had recently published his own memoir—largely about how he'd single-handedly won the Kosovo war. With Schröder in trouble and Lafontaine discredited, Scharping began to see political daylight for the first time since he was drubbed running for chancellor against Kohl in 1994. Alluding to rumors that he sought the chancellorship—rumors he himself had started—Scharping made a disingenuous bid for power: "How stupid do you think I am," he complained, "if you think that after twenty-five years in the SPD I'd look at the Defense Ministry as the road to the chancellor's spot? If I wanted to be chancellor, I'd be better off talking about the gap between rich and poor, between the strong and the weak, between east and west, and the social order in the job market." In other words, Scharping was inviting Germans to compare his own defense policy (a resounding success, he thought) with Schröder's domestic policy (an outright flop).

Scharping's ambitions and the Berlin elections put the writing on the wall. Schröder would face a challenge from within the SPD at his next sign of weakness, so he moved frantically to shore up his position in the party. He had just spent a half-year establishing himself as a person who could be trusted on the economy, but now he threw it all out the window. Within hours of the Sunday elections Schröder endorsed a "wealth tax" of the sort called for by the Jusos (those socialists who'd never held a job). That is,

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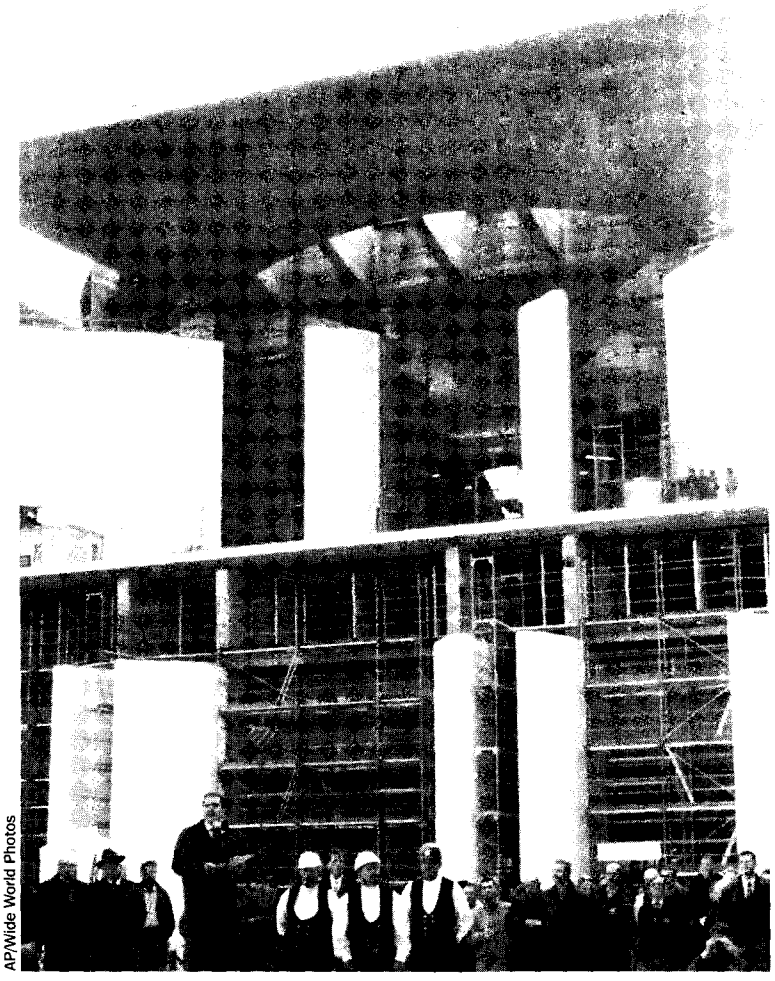

AP/Wide World Photos

Gerhard Schröder, dedicating the new Berlin Chancellery

a wealth tax of the sort that even France's socialists are determined to scrap as too damaging to their economy.

Two days later, in a story that is almost literally unbelievable outside of Germany, he caved in to IG Metall. Since the day Schröder came to power, IG Metall, the largest union in Germany, had been making the ridiculous and dangerous demand that the age at which its members can retire with full benefits should fall to 60. This was ridiculous because it more than undid the exceedingly modest pension reform that Schröder was trying to pass as part of his savings plan. It was doubly ridiculous given the German schooling and apprentice system, under which even union workers often don't enter the work force until their late twenties: which, in turn, in this age of rising life expectancy, means something like 30 years of work to support 85 years of life. And it was dangerous because under German law, the minister of labor is *required* to declare IG Metall's negotiations binding on all other unions, under an "obligatory usage treaty."

As long as he was standing firm against the union, Schröder had tried to finesse the issue: "We're not arguing over principle," he would say, "but the thing just isn't financeable." Once he caved in, everything went but the propensity for euphemism. His labor minister Walter Riester pretended to agree with IG Metall that early retirement would "create jobs" and maybe even work as a "solution to unemployment." (The early retirements, you see, would open up jobs for younger workers.) This is the same thinking French economists have pursued under the Jospin government, in trying to set up a maximum 35-hour workweek. Unfortunately, many of the people at IG Metall are already only working *32-hour* weeks. It was a typically German political mess.

Schröder is in an untenable position. Some have said that his problem is that he lacks a project—like Blair's moral agenda, or Clinton's moralistic one—that would give Germans something in return for relinquishing their welfare state. Others say that he lacks a figure like Lionel Jospin's social affairs minister Martine Aubry, a lightning rod who could satisfy leftists in his party that they're represented, and provide a whipping boy inside the government, against whom Schröder could establish his credibility as a reformer. (Lafontaine was always too independent for such a role.) The most common explanation for Schröder's woes is that unlike Blair, who had first to reform his party before coming to power, Schröder has to rule with an antiquated SPD. But that can't be the problem, either, because Clinton has succeeded wonderfully in governing with a Democratic party that, in 1992 at least, was stuck in its old ways.

The difference is that Schröder's party is dying. German political scientists describe the SPD as a "milieu" party that grew out of labor shops. In the information age, heavy industrial employment just . . . goes, and with it goes the SPD's voting base. You can replace those jobs with service jobs, but no western country has succeeded in replacing them with more heavy industrial employment, as Germany has tried—and failed—to do. Germany has created only 900,000 jobs in services to make up for the 3 million it has lost in industry in the 1990s.

It's this erosion that Schröder's politics of the New Middle is meant to address. Schröder wants, like the American and British pols he has met at international conferences, to replace his rank-and-file industrial workers with chic yuppie entrepreneurs. But Germany never had the Thatcherite or Reaganite reforms that are the precondition for yuppie ascendancy. As such, Schröder's program is aimed at a class and a German mindset that don't yet exist. That's why it's not just Schröder's party that's unready for him. It's the economy and the state as well, both of which are grinding slowly down. If Germany dawdles further on reform, this grinding down will soon make Europe's largest nation an unstable and contentious place. ♦

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Even Drug War Advocates Agree:

Mandatory Minimum Sentencing is Bad!

Stephen G. Breyer, Supreme Court Justice

"Mandatory sentencing laws should be abolished."

Source: United States Supreme Court Justice Stephen G. Breyer, in a speech at the University of Nebraska College, November 20, 1998.

Barry B. McCaffrey, "Drug Czar"

" - mandatory sentencing ties the hands of judges too tightly and prevents them from exercising discretion and good judgment." "By revising these sentencing rules, our intent is to broaden support for our drug policies, restore respect for the law and foster a more effective division of responsibility between federal, state and local law enforcement."

Source: Prepared Remarks by Barry R. McCaffrey, director, Office of National Drug Control Policy Before the First Annual Criminal Justice and Substance Abuse Conference, Albany, New York, June 29, 1999.

Joseph A. Califano, Jr., President, CASA

" Laws that prescribe mandatory sentences for possession of small amounts of marijuana are overkill. In general, mandatory sentences, especially those requiring drug and alcohol abusers and addicts to serve their entire sentence, are counterproductive. We need all the carrots and sticks we can muster to help these individuals shake their habit. Mandatory sentences take away any potential that an early release might hold as an incentive for such an inmate to enter treatment. Such sentences also remove the leverage that parole offers to get recently released inmates to continue treatment and aftercare or face a return to prison."

Source: *Joseph A. Califano, Jr. Chairman and President,* The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University on release of Non-Medical Marijuana: Rite of Passage or Russian Roulette? July 1999.

Let Judges *Judge*.
Let's not tie their hands.

Common Sense for Drug Policy, Kevin B. Zeese, President
703-354-5694, 703-354-5695 (fax), info@csdp.org, www.csdp.org

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Lone Star

Larry McMurtry's Return to Texas

by WOODY WEST

UPI / Corbis-Bettmann

Larry McMurtry published his first novel, *Horseman, Pass By* in 1961 and won a Pulitzer Prize for *Lonesome Dove* in 1986. Along with turning out a bushel of other novels, he has written screenplays, essays, and reviews, running with the big dogs of Hollywood and New York. And he has acquired a reputation as an antiquarian book dealer. But that Larry McMurtry is not the Larry McMurtry of these "reflections."

No one remains the same person over a long march of sixty years, of course, as the rough rubbings of experience transform all but the most witless. McMurtry's other self, however, had a more shattering genesis, the result of a heart bypass when he was 55, in 1991. The operation went well, but two months later, "I ceased to be able to read." It felt, he said, "somewhat like death—personality death, at least . . . I felt as if I was vanishing—or more accurately, *had* vanished."

Reading had been the core and point of McMurtry's life. As a youngster on a hardscrabble Texas ranch he had discovered, in a box of books given him by an uncle leaving for the army in World War II, that there was a vastly wider world out there than the one his grandparents and parents had endured through incessant labor simply to remain on the land. What reading gave him, many years later surgery took away, turning him into a recluse for two and a half years, during which he was taken in by a friend and her daughter. He sensed that he might never recover the "wholeness . . . the integrity of the self." So he began the arduous chore that continues "to put a kind of alternate self together." Eventually he began to be able to read again for pleasure.

Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen
Reflections at Sixty and Beyond
by Larry McMurtry
Simon & Schuster, 204 pp., $21

Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen: Reflections at Sixty and Beyond is not, however, one of those accounts of a terrible illness that excavates the bruised psyche and battered body of the sufferer (a genre of inexplicable popularity). While the book is autobiographical, it might be called the autobiography of a reader; there is little about McMurtry's lively career as novelist, screenwriter, and intimate of celebrities.

His ruminations about his pioneer ancestors and life on the marginal cattle ranch from which he briskly departed are poignant. These reflections on his past, his ancestors' past, and his more recent convalescence are linked through his examination of an essay by Walter Benjamin, the German cultural essayist, which McMurtry first read while nursing a lime Dr. Pepper at the Dairy Queen in his Texas hometown. Benjamin's essay, "The Storyteller," is a study of "the growing obsolescence of what might be called practical memory and the consequent diminution of the power of oral narrative in our twentieth-century lives."

Indeed, McMurtry reckons that "fewer and fewer humans really need to remember very much," since the "extent to which what's given us by the media is our memory now. The media not only supplies us with memories of all significant events . . . but edits those memories for us too." Thus, he wonders with Benjamin if "the communicability of experience is decreasing." This provocative but familiar complaint provides McMurtry with a conduit into the "arid" small-town life of his native turf. Storytellers were already "nearly extinct" in northwest Texas when he was

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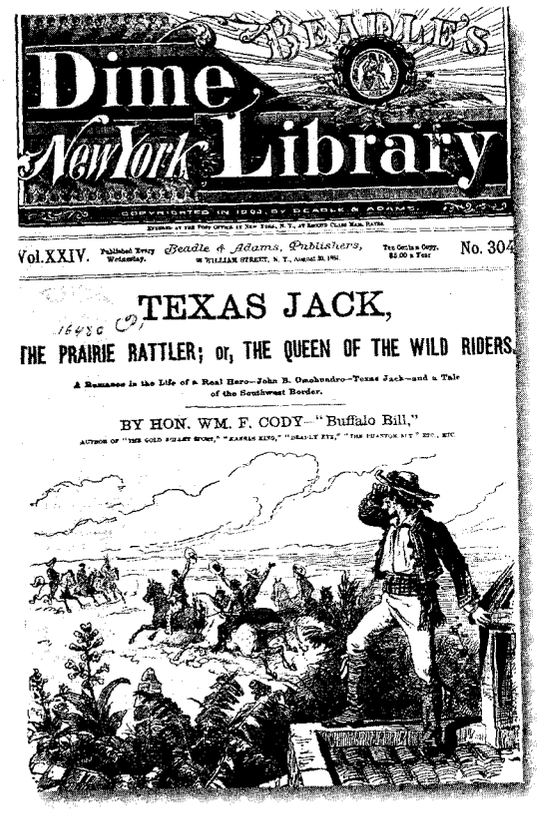
reaching maturity. This leads him logically into the history and the myth of America's westering experience.

Which in turn leads a reader to reflect on Larry McMurtry. He is a literary journeyman. If there were an all-star team of letters, it is doubtful that fans would vote for McMurtry; however, he likely would be one of the manager's selections to fill the roster—a savvy utility infielder, say, who knows how to bunt and won't kick games away with errors.

The novel that may constitute McMurtry's literary legacy is *Lonesome Dove*, a marvelous tale that was turned into one of the finest series to appear on commercial television. Memorably starring Robert Duvall and Tommy Lee Jones, the four-hour production is one of those rare examples of a first-rate book transformed into a first-rate film. There is, in fact, a film-like quality throughout McMurtry's fiction, which may be why half a dozen of his novels have become movies. *Horseman, Pass By* was made into the 1963 movie *Hud* with Paul Newman, which has held up quite well. Probably the best-known film based on a McMurtry novel, and indeed a better movie than the novel, is *The Last Picture Show*, which launched Cybill Shepherd onto the celebrity fast-track.

But *Lonesome Dove* is an alp among foothills in McMurtry's prolific career. Curiously, or so it seems to its author, *Lonesome Dove* was popularly read (and viewed) in the romantic tradition of the American frontier. But McMurtry says he wrote it as a variation on that venerable thematic myth. In fact, he thought he was "demythicizing" the romanticized West. He intended to portray his characters as less "triumphalist" than Western heroes traditionally have been presented since the nineteenth-century dime novels. Which is to say, McMurtry wanted to get away from the typical story of brave and uncomplicated individualists who endured horrific obstacles in heroic exertions to rout the bad guys and make life safe for the schoolmarm and preacher.

Augustus McCrae and Woodrow Call, the ex-Texas Rangers who ramrod the cattle drive, are tough and capable. But the former is so costive that he cannot acknowledge the illegitimate son who worships him, while the latter clings so tightly to his footloose freedom that he denies himself genuine love. McMurtry's intended demythification went awry probably because of his skill in creating vividly admirable individuals, heroic despite the dents and burrs of



character. Furthermore, McMurtry is nearly unrivaled in his ability to convey the grandeur and the terror of the Western land itself.

Despite the critical and popular success of the novel, McMurtry notes that he grew tired of the Old West theme as he continued work on the tetralogy of which *Lonesome Dove* was the first part. It shows in *The Streets of Laredo*, the sequel, which is unrelievedly grim, offering only vestiges of the gritty verve of its predecessor. The sequel to that sequel and then the (detestable word) prequel, were both pale and limp.

Yet McMurtry sees his writing life as book-ended by stories of the West and is fascinated by its enduring, if increasingly attenuated, symbolism. The cowboy has, he writes, been "absorbed into the national bloodstream," the distillation of the dynamic movement of Manifest Destiny. (Never mind that the cowboy's historical actuality occupied only about twenty years toward the shank of the nineteenth century.) He notes that his grandfather watched, from the hill of the McMurtry homestead, the start of one of the last of the great overland cattle drives.

The image and symbolism of the West has lived on even as younger historians beaverly gnaw away at the concept of the frontier as a potent determinant of who we are and what this country is. To the academicians of the "New Western" history, it is a symbolism not just mythic—which is to say, true in its generality if not in all particulars—but false.

A belle of the deconstructionist ball is Patricia Nelson Limerick. Her 1987 book, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*, is a primary text of this mauling of myth. The popular reverence for the "pioneer" West, she argues, ignores the treatment of Indians and other minority groups, despoliation of the land, and acquisitive obsession. The West as most people know it from novels and movies is, she writes, "ethnocentric and tied to a simple notion of progress." More to the point, there was really no "frontier," a myth that has obscured and distorted what she and other New Western historians regard as a social, political, and especially an economic continuum. "Conquest," in her context, is of course an eight-cylinder pejorative noun.

As Limerick puts it, "Reorganized, the history of the West is a study of a place undergoing conquest and never fully escaping its consequences"—rather than "a process," as is Frederick Jackson Turner's moving frontier, where civilization is planted and nurtured. It is not difficult to caricature this "reorganized" study with its proliferating subspecialties for professorial harvest—Western women, Native Ameri-

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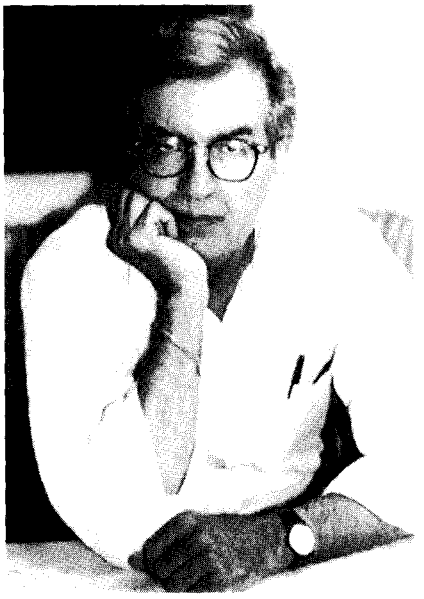
Left: Archive Photos. Right: Simon & Schuster. Opposite page: UPI / Corbis-Bettmann.



Above: Larry McMurtry in 1999. Left: Timothy Bottoms and Jeff Bridges in the movie version of The Last Picture Show.

cans, Hispanics, the environment, and perhaps Equine Studies.

Though the regional historiography of the past three decades is not without interesting elaborations on the era, in the eagerness to hew a new path through the woods the traditional notion—and connotations—of a frontier have been denigrated. The casualties have been respect for the indomitable courage of settlement and the tough virtues that required. These are relegated to the intellectual junk heap as "ethnocentric" and "exclusive." Courage and virtue are merely euphemisms for a "contest for property and profit" in "a context for cultural dominance." The historian Bruce Lincoln, in his study of Russia and Siberia, puts such matters quite differently: "Nations are born of battle, and conquest makes them great."

Larry McMurtry fits into the revisionist landscape as a "leading storyteller" of this "new gray West," (as one historian puts it) as opposed to the white-hat/black-hat schema. Certainly the characters with whom McMurtry populates the West of his fiction, past and contemporary, are recognizably layered. But McMurtry, though ambivalent, does not disdain the traditional notions of the frontier and of the cowboy. As actuality and as historical memory to this day, he believes the frontier and the cowboy still exert a presence in America.

McMurtry's grandparents, he tells us in *Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen*, arrived in north-central Texas when it was still an unsettled frontier in the 1880s and claimed a tract of land near a seeping spring. His parents continued on this scruffy spread, though later moving a short distance to town while still ranching (McMurtry now owns the old home in which he grew up). The writer's frontier "memory" reaches back to this time of "root hog or die" in an inhospitable and frequently dangerous land. It was a lonely life, and disappointment was frequent and searing.

His father died a decade before *Lonesome Dove* and never knew that "one of his central desires—to be a trail driver—had found its way into one of my books." An affecting passage in *Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen* has the author recalling his father's reflection toward the end of his life that somehow it hadn't added up. He had not been an unhappy man, but, "in the end the two or three good horses [he had owned] seemed to mean more to him than anything he had done with cattle or the range."

His father had "attached his heart to a hopeless ideal, a nineteenth-century vision of cowboying and family pastoralism; such an ideal was not totally false, but it had been only briefly realizable." But disjunction between the reality and fantasy of the West aside, McMurtry became convinced "that the core of western myth—that cowboys are brave and cowboys are free—is essentially unassailable," even as it suffers anemia in generational transmission, for instance in today's "more genteel" country music.

McMurtry's formulation that the vision was "not entirely false" in fact reveals its own truths. The settlement of the West of which the cowboy is the preeminent image was an interlude of liberty, with unmediated freedom for the individual, that is scarcely imaginable today.

The West of tradition, and truth, was a time and place in which a man could

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come to terms with existence through a willingness to survive awful hardships (or choose his own trail to Hell from a variety of possibilities).

For that reason, the cowboy continues to gallop across our culture, crowded and constrained as it increasingly is. That things were done that might have been done in an otherwise ideal world does not alter that marvelous passage of history. Men and women draw sustenance from the myths that shape their collective past. They provide an essential continuity that, in America, rested from the beginning on a rare stratum of ideals and aspiration. Indeed, the "myths" of the West contribute to undermine the idea that ours is a culture without a compass.

In a way, Larry McMurtry's own writings also refute Walter Benjamin on the anachronism of the storyteller, as does the alternate self McMurtry is constructing "beyond sixty." He has shunned the bright lights of the big city and returned to his homeplace, Archer City, Texas. Though the town is down at its heels like many small towns in flyover America, he is intent on turning it into a "book town," buying up vacant commercial buildings and stuffing them with used books.

McMurtry reminisces about his years as a "book scout"—he thinks he has devoted as much of his life to dealing in books as to writing—and his travels from city to city and the hours spent burrowing in the old downtown used-book stores that are vanishing. Archer City now, he says, is "a kind of anthology of bookshops past—remnants of twenty-two bookshops now reside there," with more to come as he now "herds" books instead of herding cattle as his family did for so long. "I still believe that books are the fuel of genius. Leaving a million or so is as good a legacy as I can think of for that region and indeed for the West."

In much of *Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen*, the authorial voice is on the austere, even chilly, side. But Larry McMurtry as he emerges from it seems to be a man who in his "second self" knows where he came from and why he returned. ♦

UPI / Corbis-Bettmann. Opposite: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Test Ban?

How the SATs have shaped—and misshaped—modern American life. BY MARY CAMPBELL GALLAGHER

James B. Conant was president of Harvard from 1933 to 1953, a chemist by training who—through the influence of his books on education—helped create the huge, comprehensive American high school. But he also helped create the modern American college, for it's thanks in part to Conant that the admissions offices in selective colleges no longer look primarily to prep-school polish and character. They look instead to a number of factors, always including the prospective freshman's score on the SAT—the "Scholastic Aptitude Test," as it was called until the name was corrected to the "Scholastic Assessment Test" in 1994.

Conant was inspired by an 1813 letter from Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, arguing that "there is a natural aristocracy among men," based on virtue and talent, and that these men should be selected for "the offices of government." In the late 1930s, the newly developed SAT, a multiple-choice test of verbal and mathematical abilities, seemed to Conant the way to discover for Harvard some midwestern diamonds in the rough.

Thus, when the Educational Testing Service was founded in 1948 to administer the SAT, Conant installed as its first president an assistant Harvard dean named Henry Chauncey. And ETS grew rapidly, by talent and guile, putting rival tests out of business, spreading across the country, and expanding its range with the Law School Aptitude Test (LSAT) and a series of other tests. When, in 1968, the University of California system began requiring SAT scores from its applicants, ETS had captured the largest college market in the United States—and American education has never been the same.

This is the story Nicholas Lemann sets out to tell in *The Big Test: The Secret History of the American Meritocracy*. And

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his thesis is that Chauncey and his successors at ETS managed—without public consultation or debate—to turn the SAT into the primary gateway to money, power, and prestige in America.

Lemann has certainly found a fascinating topic. Americans are obsessed with SAT scores, and the test-preparation industry has grown enormously since it was discovered that the test does not, in fact, measure aptitude and so is coachable. But you'd think that the most interesting thing about the history of the SAT is the fact that students' scores—despite the money we spend preparing our children for the test—have been trending downwards for decades; American high-school education, particularly in mathematics and science, is inadequate by any measure.

Despite his title, however, Lemann doesn't focus on secrets and certainly not on education. A Harvard-educated journalist, author of *The Fast Track* and, more recently, *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America*, Lemann uses *The Big Test* mostly to pursue his interest in strivers and social climbers. He calls the graduates of America's selective colleges "Mandarins"; they go on to prosperous careers in law and the other professions, including journalism. His "Lifers" are career employees in the government and corporations. And his "Talents" are entrepreneurs and artists. Since World War II, he says, we have developed a system of elite colleges that produce the Mandarins, inside a larger educational system of mass opportunity that produces the Lifers and the Talents.

In his early chapters—by far the best part of *The Big Test*—Lemann traces the fascinating history of the SAT, drawing on extensive interviews (including with Henry Chauncey himself, now in his nineties) and on material in ETS's archives. But in the middle chapters, *The Big Test* suddenly turns to the question of affirmative action. According to Lemann, affirmative action represents the collision between the meritocratic principle and the principle of equal opportunity. As Lemann does not explain fully, when the selective colleges started increasing the number of minority applicants in the late 1960s and early 1970s under affirmative action, the use of the SAT made deficiencies in the education of black applicants startlingly measurable. Only at Harvard, which has its pick of minority applicants, do the average scores of preferentially admitted black students come within 95 points (out of 1,600 possible) of the average scores of white students.

Then, in his final chapters, Lemann sketches, sometimes tediously, young Mandarins attempting to defeat challenges to affirmative action. The regents of the University of California voted in 1995 to abolish affirmative action programs, and in 1996, voters passed the California Civil Rights Initiative (Proposition 209), outlawing affirmative action in state government. Lemann's narrative follows a lawyer, Molly Munger (like this reviewer, a 1974 graduate of Harvard Law School, in the first class to consist of more than 10 percent women), as she becomes an activist in the failed opposition to Proposition 209.

Nicholas Lemann

The Big Test
The Secret History of the American Meritocracy
by Nicholas Lemann
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 406 pp., $27

The Big Test is institutional history and policy argument cast in the literary form of a novel. Relying on his stories and vignettes, Lemann provides only weak support—or none at all—for either the sweeping generalizations about the importance of the SAT with which he begins his book or the policy conclusions with which he ends it. He says repeatedly that the SAT is the gateway to money, power, and prestige in America. Readers who work through the book will have reflected in the meantime, however, that few of America's billionaires, elected local officials, and celebrities ever seem to have relied upon their SAT scores to introduce them to success. Even Lemann sees it, remarking toward the end of *The Big Test* that "If any one category of people ran America it was the Talents." What happened to the promised revelations about selective colleges and "money, power, and prestige"? Lemann merely concludes that the high-scoring Mandarins are not, in fact, the new aristocrats that Conant imagined.

But Lemann is right that a good score on the SAT opens for students the chance for greater money, power, and prestige. And the more overstated and dramatic he makes his case, the more motivation there is for affirmative action. Thus Lemann sees the struggle over Proposition 209 in California entirely through the eyes of its Mandarin opponents. Supporters are either uninformed or lack integrity. Glynn Custred, one of the leaders of the campaign for Proposition 209, taught in "the chilly Siberia of the Mandarin culture" at California State University at Hayward. Ward Connerly, the black businessman who sponsored the voter initiative, did whatever the governor told him to do.

The truth is, of course, that there are many people who support the advancement of minorities and who nonetheless dislike affirmative action—claiming, among other things, that so long as we rely on affirmative action to paste over the problem of lower minority SAT scores, we will not force ourselves to improve the grade schools and high schools that minority students attend. Certainly the admissions policies of America's colleges have real consequences in lower education. When the University of North Carolina reinstituted strong college preparatory requirements in 1988, the need for remedial

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classes at the college plummeted. Even Lemann observes that when the University of California stopped supervising the curriculum of high schools, standards slipped—which then required the university to use the SAT to distinguish among applicants.

At one time, the Ivy League set clear standards for the college-preparatory curriculum in American high schools. Candidates had to present four years of Latin, three years of mathematics, and so on. The growth of the sciences in the university curriculum and the demands of the professional schools exerted the first pressure to reduce these requirements. (Harvard abolished the Latin requirement for science students in 1912.) And the adoption of the elective system, first at Harvard and then elsewhere, eventually shattered colleges' command over what high schools taught. And since the SAT is not a full achievement test, colleges can use it only to weigh one student's promise against another's. They cannot use it to stop the downward drift of real achievement that has been occurring for a long time.

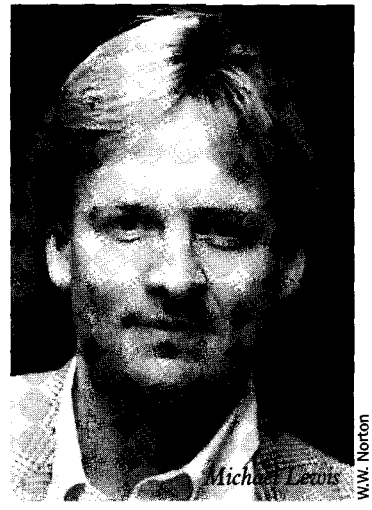
For all his promises of shocking revelations about the selection of our meritocracy, Lemann challenges almost nothing in the American university system. He criticizes the SAT, but he loves the greasy pole of success. He scorns the kind of old-fashioned authority exercised by Henry Chauncey, but he admires the research universities Chauncey nurtured. It seems not to occur to Lemann, however, that our German-style universities—with their huge menus of elective courses, their armies of teaching assistants, and their reliance on a multiple-choice test for entrance—are short-changing undergraduates. The index to *The Big Test* contains no entry for "liberal arts."

Lemann is surely right that the SAT has failed to fulfill James B. Conant's plan to identify Jefferson's "natural aristocracy" of talent and virtue. But that doesn't make it right that our elite colleges and universities seem to have given up on looking at the character of their applicants and nurturing the full humanity of their students. ♦

Not So New Thing

Michael Lewis misses his chance to write the great book about Silicon Valley. BY DAVID SKINNER

Michael Lewis's *The New New Thing* isn't, as its title suggests, about the search for the next great intellectual or commercial breakthrough. Rather, it's a book-length magazine profile of Jim Clark, the man who founded Silicon Graphics, Netscape, and Healtheon, and his search for that new new thing.



W.W. Norton

The New New Thing
A Silicon Valley Story
by Michael Lewis
Norton, 268 pp., $29.95

A drop-out from high school, Clark signed up for the Navy, where it was discovered that he had some serious mathematical talent. After getting a Ph.D. in computer science from the University of Utah, he "married at least twice, sired at least two children, moved back and forth across the country at least three times, and held at least four different jobs, mainly at universities."

And then one day in 1978, everything changed. Clark, teaching at Stanford at the time, designed the chip that made possible the easy manipulation of three-dimensional graphics on computers, and, in the early 1980s, he started Silicon Graphics, the firm that remade Hollywood's special effects. Once the business types took over that company, Clark, working with a young programmer fresh from the University of Illinois, went on to found Netscape in 1994, which became the benchmark for the new Internet browser market. Eighteen months later, on August 9, 1995, the initial public offering of Netscape shares traded at $12, reaching $48 by the end of the day and $140 just three months later.

The author of *The New New Thing*, Michael Lewis, first came to public notice in 1989 as the twenty-nine-year-old shark who wrote *Liar's Poker*, a superb insider's account of Salomon Brothers, the Wall Street firm that dominated the 1980s bond market. Some of its riffs, especially the jungle metaphors and lascivious imagery employed by bond traders to describe their accomplishments, enjoyed a fame of their own.

Now Lewis has joined the race to write The Great Book about the computer industry. Indeed, he shows his desire on the first page, with an epigraph from Ezra Pound: "The age demanded an image of its accelerated grimace." And so Lewis presents Jim Clark as the quintessential Silicon Valley figure, which may be fair enough: Clark talks a big game, plays a big game—having started three multibillion dollar companies—and best of all, he loves material things: not just software or hardware, but airplanes, boats, and houses. He's a wealth-creation

David Skinner is an associate editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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machine complete with images readers can see.

With the very first chapter, "The Boat That Built Netscape," Lewis begins to exploit this advantage. Clark wanted Netscape to go public long before it had made any profit so he'd have the cash to buy an enormous, computerized yacht. But *Hyperion*, as it was christened, was a boat no sailor could take seriously. Even Jim Clark seemed tired of it once its long-awaited Atlantic crossing was underway. Yet Lewis spends over forty pages on it.

This kind of writing, beloved by the authors of magazine profiles, cannot explain what a person is really like. Describing Clark's role in Healtheon, a business that facilitates medical transactions, Lewis writes, "He was attached to the business in the same way that Jack Nicholson was attached to a film script—thus increasing the likelihood that the script will become a movie. Simply by floating around and taking an interest, he makes all involved feel as if they are engaged in something very special." One gets the feeling that Lewis is really just phoning it in—making in-the-know comments for his in-the-know readers. It comes easily because Lewis likes Clark and doesn't want to say anything too damning about him. But it forces the reader to treat everything in *The New New Thing* with suspicion. Clark "once told me," Lewis writes, "'I can't be a venture capitalist, because I'm not that kind of person, and I can't be a manager because I'm not that kind of person. The only thing I can do is start [companies].' His role in the Valley was suddenly clear: he was the author of the story."

For *The New New Thing*—the title phrase is used so often in the book it quickly becomes an old old thing—Lewis didn't look far into Clark's life. His first wife and a son are mentioned, but presumably weren't interviewed. His present wife is mentioned, briefly. His adult life prior to his entering the computer business comes off in a two-page dash, expanded later with some less-than-complete commentary from Clark's mother and sister. "As a practical matter," Lewis writes, "Clark had no past, only a future." Such "practical matters" come up often. Lewis writes at one point that Clark wouldn't let Wall Street types into "his sacred world of machines." He didn't let Lewis in either, and so the reader gets lavish descriptions of Clark's land, air, and sea adventures instead of an account of how this man's mind works.

Two chapters, however, stand out. The Department of Justice's case against Microsoft, carried out largely on Netscape's behalf, required a court appearance by Clark—and provided an occasion for Lewis to demonstrate his talent for capturing a scene filled with opposition, winners, losers, and rules that make the game intelligible. The other notable chapter profiles three engineers, two of them Indian, who went to work starting up Healtheon for Clark. "The talent that the government [of India] had gone to such trouble to find and cultivate wound up being some of the most sought-after corporate employees on the planet." It is a testament to the power and flexibility of American capitalism that a handful of engineers, most of them foreigners, led by a wild-eyed entrepreneur, could foist themselves on anything so complex as our health care system. If only the rest of the book were so pointed and well examined.

For his bestselling *Liar's Poker*, Michael Lewis went to great lengths to illuminate the complicated story of the changes in federal law and the financial mechanisms that shuttled money into bonds and made a small group of men rich. But 1990s Silicon Valley, he feels compelled to write, makes "1980s Wall Street seem like the low-stakes poker table." Thus does Lewis allude to his old beat, where as a young writer, he risked a lot to tell a first-rate story. *The New New Thing* is a familiar bit of high-tech cheerleading, by a writer too sophisticated to let on that he has traded in his wicked pen for a set of pom-poms. ♦

When Irish Eyes Weren't Smiling

Growing up in South Boston in the 1970s: A tale of race, poverty, and busing. **BY SETH GITELL**

Michael Patrick MacDonald's *All Souls* is a story of the inner city. Its characters inhabit a rundown housing project and live in grinding poverty. The author is the son of an unwed mother. He does not know his father. His mother is beaten by the men she brings into her life. One of his brothers dies in a botched armored-car heist. A second brother hangs himself in jail. A third dies after leaping off the roof of the projects. A fourth serves time on a murder rap until an appeals judge exonerates him. An older sister suffers severe brain damage when, after a binge of valium, speed, and cocaine, she also falls from a great height.

All Souls
A Family Story From Southie
by Michael Patrick MacDonald
Beacon, 266 pp., $24

At this point, you might think that *All Souls* is merely yet another grim tale aimed at reinforcing the liberal orthodoxy on welfare, race, and the inner cities. But it is really much more than that. The book's author is a white, Irish Catholic resident of South Boston. His story is already causing a stir in Boston, where MacDonald's

Seth Gitell covers politics for the Boston Phoenix.

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UPI / Corbis-Bettmann. Below: Beacon Press

Anti-school-busing rally in South Boston, 1974. Below: The MacDonald children in the 1970s.

publisher canceled book readings after neighborhood toughs, angry with MacDonald's revelations, threatened to disrupt his appearances.

What makes the book significant, however, are not the neighborhood secrets MacDonald discloses, but the possibility it holds out for a new way to think and talk about race in America.

All Souls would probably not have been possible without the current wave of books of Irish angst. But where such books as Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes* and Malachy McCourt's *A Monk Swimming* tell the story of the transition from Ireland to America, MacDonald's book tells what can happen the next generation or two down the line. The tale begins with a mother and eight children in the middle-class neighborhood of Jamaica Plain. MacDonald's mother, a proud redhead named Helen, is an accordion player with a penchant for country music who has just moved her brood of eight children—sans husband—back into her parents' house. Her father, an Irish-born dockworker with a cap and a brogue, is old-fashioned enough to tell her, "You've made your bed. Now lie in it." But when he decides to sell the house, Helen and her children are forced to find a spot in the Old Colony housing project, and MacDonald's story begins in full.

In his 1996 memoir *While the Music Lasts: My Life in Politics*, the Massachusetts Democratic politician William M. Bulger described the South Boston of his childhood as "a largely blue-collar area. . . . Families were stable: a divorce was a whispered horror. We had our share of bars and bookies and sin, but the area then, as now, had the city's lowest rate of serious crime."

The South Boston of Michael Patrick MacDonald, however, is a place with few men working legally. Crime and drugs are rampant, and the most popular neighborhood figure is not William Bulger but his brother James J. "Whitey" Bulger, a gangster who is now one of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's most wanted fugitives. MacDonald's South Boston is among the poorest neighborhoods in America, a "death zone" into which taxi drivers—black or white—refuse to venture.

Upon their arrival at the Old Colony project, the MacDonalds discovered pro-IRA graffiti and shamrocks and the standard violent initiation into the community. But after a series of fistfights and scuffles with local toughs, the MacDonalds settled in—only to be caught up in one of the greatest urban social experiments of the twentieth century: busing. *All Souls* relates in great detail the almost ceaseless demonstrations and marches in the neighborhood in 1974. Neighborhood youths, like MacDonald, bore the brunt of the government policing:

"The helicopters above my bedroom window woke me each morning for school, and my friends and I would plan to pass by the [Tactical Police Force] on the corners so we could walk around them and give them hateful

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looks." The author also depicts the times the neighborhood protests turned into racial violence.

The anger at the government turned the neighborhood away from such local politicians as Senator Edward Kennedy, who was seen as a traitor, and toward George Wallace, who paid a high-profile visit to South Boston in 1976. MacDonald's mother appeared on the television news wearing a button on Wallace's behalf.

MacDonald goes on to trace the family's unhappy life in the projects—the deaths of his brothers and the other misfortunes. He paints in vivid detail a portrait of a neighborhood locked down under Whitey Bulger, who ran South Boston out of the back room of a liquor store. But when MacDonald tried to enlist private charities and liberal groups in his quest to free his younger brother, falsely implicated in the death of another neighborhood youth, he found himself defined as a non-victim:

> While Steven was locked up in the Department of Youth Services, I called every organization in town that talked about violence and the police department's reactionary ways in black and Latino neighborhoods. One guy listened for about fifteen minutes while I told him about the abuses in Steven's case, until I said "South Boston." Then he asked me if Steven, was, by chance a minority who'd moved into South Boston. "Nope." "Well, unless he's a minority or gay, I'm afraid there's not much we can do."

Make no mistake, MacDonald is no racist. He recounts with zeal the attitudes of a black co-worker towards the charitable establishment: "plantations . . . with all these 'house Negroes' running around and fetching their coffee." He goes out of his way in *All Souls* to demonstrate how much his neighborhood has in common with the black area of Roxbury.

Similarly, MacDonald is no conservative. One gets the sense that he would like to see some sort of socialism in America to address the woes of whites and blacks equally. In this sense, *All Souls* resembles Michael Gold's 1930 autobiographical novel *Jews Without Money*, which depicts the grim life of Lower East Side Jews, complete with gangsters and drunks, prostitutes and pugilists. Gold concludes his novel with the classic call for rebellion: "O workers' Revolution, you brought hope to me, a lonely suicidal boy. You are the true Messiah." MacDonald never goes so far, but his critique of the liberal establishment does seem to be that of the far left.

Nonetheless, MacDonald's book serves as a fascinating challenge to liberalism: Liberals, he writes, "never seemed to be able to fit urban poor whites into their worldview, which tended to see blacks as the persistent dependent and their own white selves as a provider."

And MacDonald's story raises questions that any politician addressing race in America must confront. Certainly, both Al Gore and Bill Bradley fit squarely into MacDonald's critique of liberalism. To the extent George W. Bush relies on the work of private charitable institutions for do-gooding, the Texas governor does as well. Though MacDonald doesn't make the argument, *All Souls* suggests the possibility of calling for a class-based—rather than race-based—program of affirmative action.

Despite the pain he experienced growing up, MacDonald is still in love with his hometown. In 1996, he returned to South Boston after a four-year absence, and he makes a point of contrasting the existence his mother led there with the one she leads in her new home in Colorado. While she lacked money in both places, in the West she lives in a world without ethnicity or community feeling—and she becomes so desperate for a sense of what she left behind that she approaches a Colorado redhead to ask if he is Irish, only to be met with a wary stare.

The irony of MacDonald's story is that much has changed in South Boston since the events in the memoir took place. The rapidly gentrifying neighborhood now has fancy cappuccino shops and more than its share of yuppies. But the gritty saga of the South Boston MacDonalds should be read by anybody looking for a gripping and full account of poverty in urban America. ♦

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Not a Parody

Lenora Fulani

Strange bedfellow in Reform coalition

Pro-choice woman joins Buchanan

By Ralph Z. Hallow
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Lenora Fulani, a pro-choice, homosexual rights advocate, joined Pat Buchanan's Reform Party presidential nomination campaign yesterday.

"We're going to integrate that peasant army of his," Miss Fulani, a Reform Party leader, said at a joint press conference with Mr. Buchanan at the National Press Club.

"We're going to bring black folks and Latino folks and gay folks and liberal folks into that army," said Miss Fulani, who was the presidential candidate of the New Alliance Party in 1988.

Mr. Buchanan, in welcoming her aboard, said with a warm smile, "Your pitchfork has been assigned."

An opponent of abortion and homosexual rights who two weeks ago abandoned his third consecutive run for the Republican nomination, Mr. Buchanan announced yesterday that he would seek to further expand his Reform coalition by meeting with the Rev. Al Sharpton in New York.

Mr. Sharpton, who enraged much of America by promoting the Tawana Brawley rape hoax, is at least as far from Mr. Buchanan on the ideological spectrum as Miss Fulani.

In explaining his planned call on Mr. Sharpton, Mr. Buchanan was remarkably candid. "In diplomacy, you have to do some things that are very unpleasant [in order] to get along," he said. "I will be happy to talk to Mr. Sharpton, and . . . say what I believe and hear what he believes, because I'm confident in my views."

Glancing over at his new ally, Miss Fulani, he observed: "As Lenora has said, if we're going to build a coalition in this country, we've got to talk to those we profoundly disagree with."

Mr. Sharpton is considered a political power in New York's black community. Vice President Al

see **REFORM**, *page A11*

the weekly Standard
NOVEMBER 22, 1999

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Education: The New Civil Rights Frontier

E. D. Hirsch is University Professor of Education and Humanities, University of Virginia; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

Apologists for the public schools continue to blame the achievement gap between groups on social pathologies and shortcomings in the innate abilities of entire groups. But if social or IQ determinism were true, then the closing of the achievement gap between social and racial groups in liberal democracies such as France would have been impossible to achieve. Those nations have never subscribed to the romantic emphasis on process over content that has dominated our public schools since the 1950s.

If school integration had fulfilled its promise, as it might have done, academic achievement would now be more randomly distributed among social groups. There would be far less need for affirmative action in college admissions. It is one of the tragic ironies of the past half century that the desegregation of public schools occurred just when, after many decades of teacher indoctrination, progressivism successfully abolished an emphasis on traditional academic content.

By the 1970s and 1980s the public schools into which black and white first graders were integrated were places where the cultural lore necessary to full participation in society was inconsistently taught. Some children were exposed to the necessary vocabulary and knowledge at home. Those who lacked exposure to literate culture outside school received it nowhere. At the moment of highest hope, the triumph of antiacademic romanticism foreclosed the chance that school integration would equalize academic achievement and foster social justice.

For Jefferson, Mann, and Du Bois, the animating purpose of democratic education was to make everyone's life chances independent of who one's parents were. They knew only one way to do this—through the device of the "common school" with a common curriculum. Each child in a grade must learn what he or she needs to know in order to be ready to learn the lessons of the next grade.

Education is a slow and cumulative process. Knowledge builds upon knowledge, skill upon skill. With an effective curriculum and hard work, the children of the poor can catch up with the children of the rich.

Du Bois was himself the product of the New England common school and would have scorned the sentimental notion that each child should have his or her own special curriculum suited to his or her personality. Yet a recent issue of the widely read professional magazine *Educational Leadership* once again attacks such commonality in favor of the romantic ideal of "personalized learning." All innocent of the irony, the editors have placed on the cover a photograph of a young African-American boy. "Common learning" would have been a better theme.

The re-creation of the common school is the chief unfinished business of the civil rights movement. Public education in a democracy has no more right to segregated knowledge than to segregated schools.

— E.D. Hirsch

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